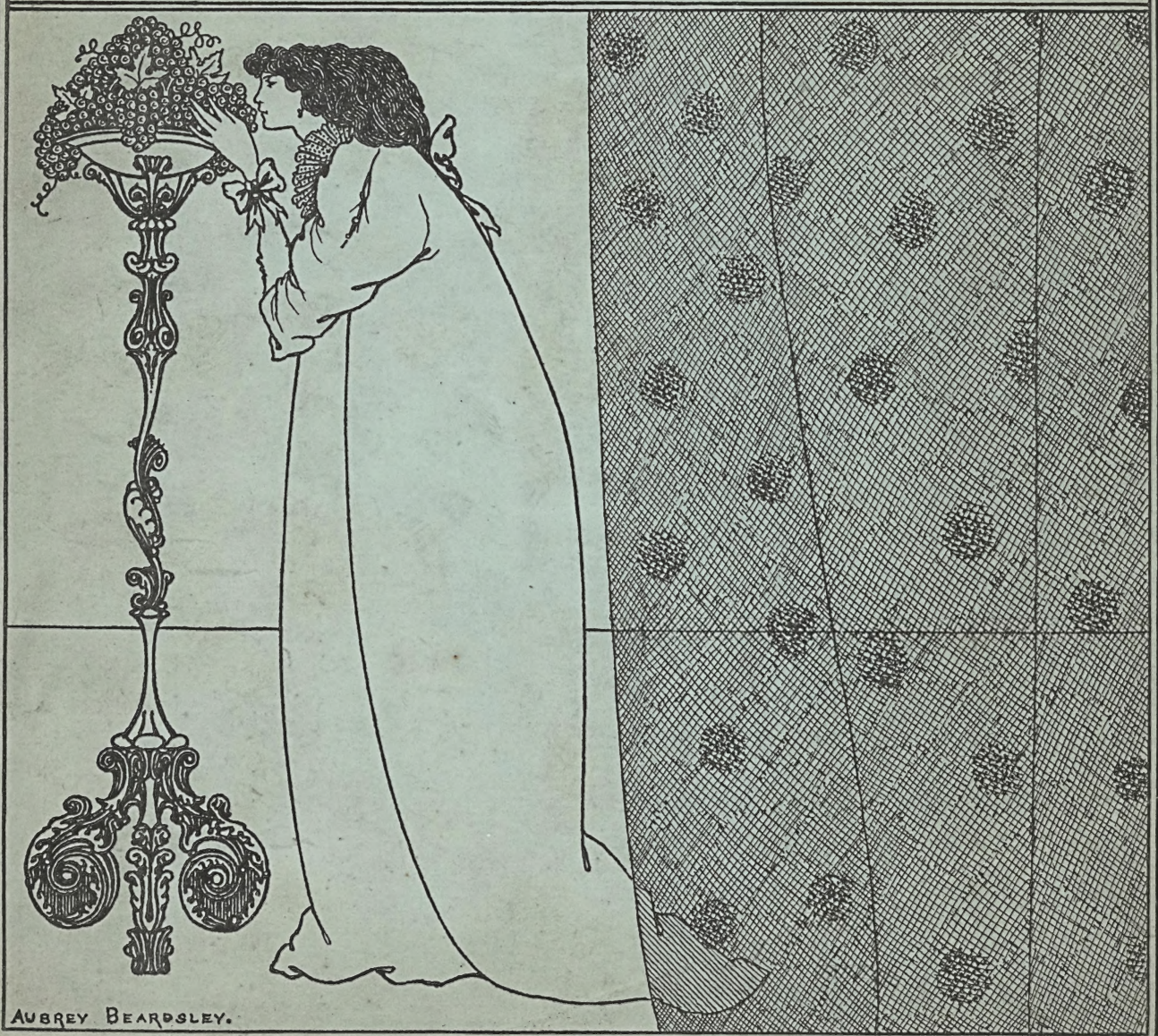
THE SAVOY

AN ILLUSTRATED MONTHLY

No. 4 August 1896 Price 2/-

EDITED BY ARTHUR SYMONS



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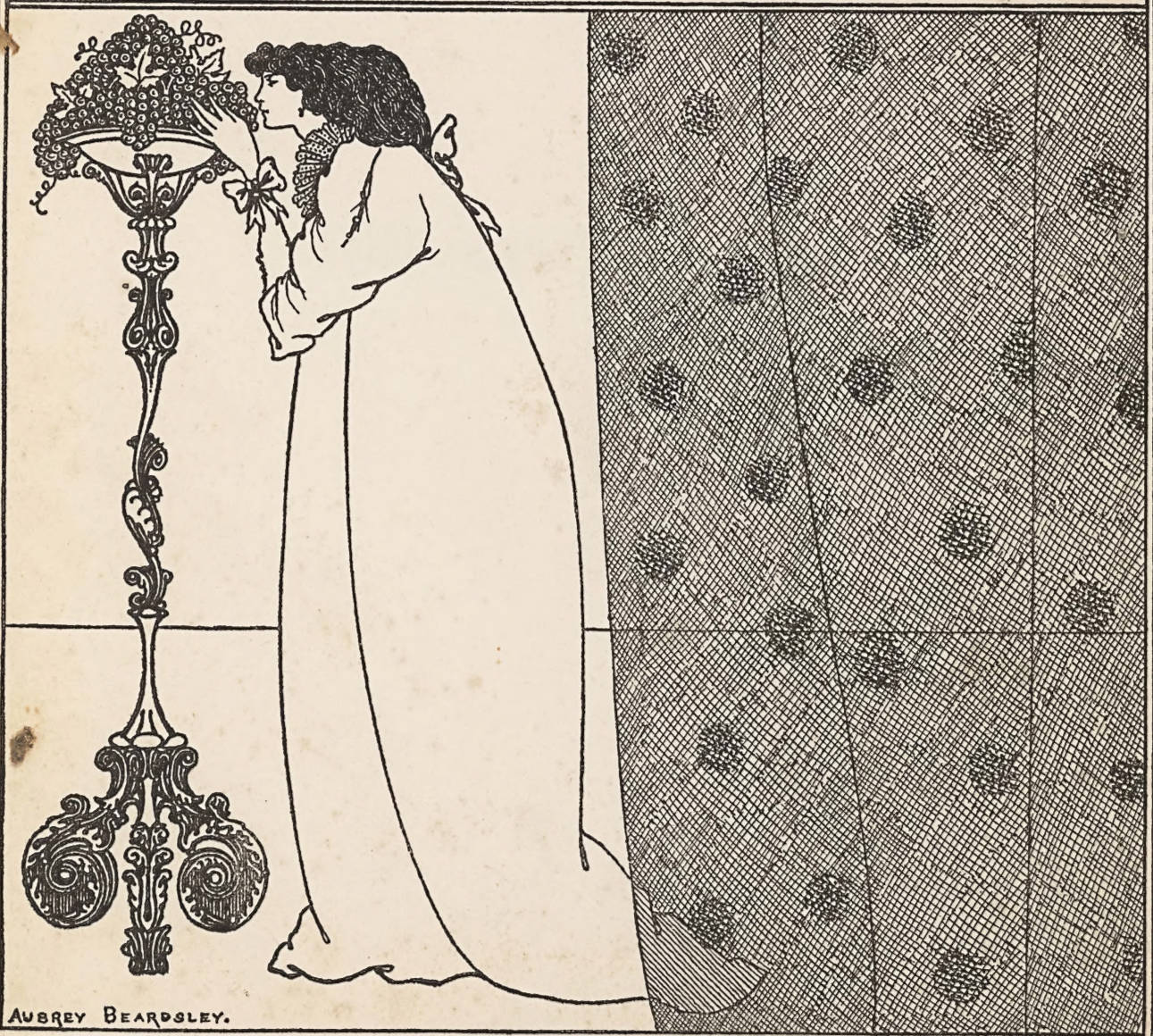

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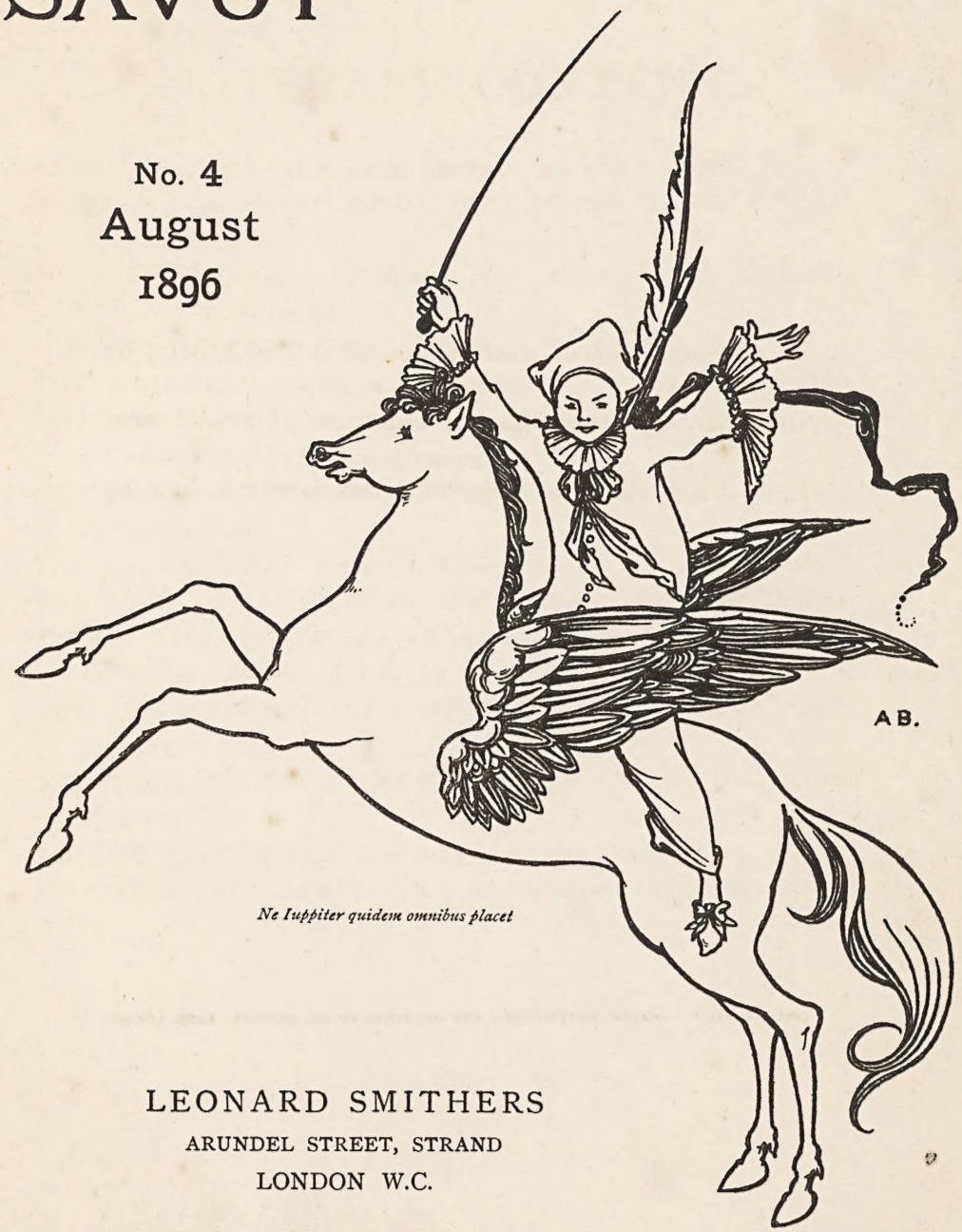

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LITERARY CONTENTS

PAGE

BEAUTY'S HOUR. A Phantasy. By O. SHAKESPEAR. (*In Two Parts*) . 11

WILLIAM BLAKE AND HIS ILLUSTRATIONS TO THE DIVINE COMEDY.

II. *His Opinions on Dante.* (The Second of Three Articles by W. B. YEATS) 25

"*VENITE, DESCENDAMUS.*" A Poem by ERNEST DOWSON . . . 41

TWO FOOLISH HEARTS. A Scene of Rustic Life. By GEORGE MORLEY 45

IN PIOUS MOOD. A Translation by OSMAN EDWARDS into English Verse of EMILE VERHAEREN'S Poem "Pieusement" 56

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE—III. (The Third of Three Articles by HAVELOCK ELLIS) 57

STELLA MALIGNA. A Poem by ARTHUR SYMONS 64

THE DYING OF FRANCIS DONNE. A Study. By ERNEST DOWSON 66

THREE SONNETS. (*Hawker of Morwenstow.—Mother Ann: Foundress of the Shakers.—Münster:* A.D. 1534.) By LIONEL JOHNSON . . . 75

THE GINGERBREAD FAIR AT VINCENNES. A Colour Study. By ARTHUR SYMONS 79

THE SONG OF THE WOMEN. A Wealden Trio. By FORD MADOX HUEFFER 85

DOCTOR AND PATIENT. A Story by RUDOLF DIRCKS 87

A LITERARY CAUSERIE:—On a Book of Verses. By ARTHUR SYMONS 91

NOTE 94

ART CONTENTS

PAGE

COVER . . } Designed by AUBREY BEARDSLEY { 1
TITLE PAGE } { 5

THE NOVEL. A Lithograph by T. R. WAY 9

DANTE AND UBERTI. After an unpublished Water-Colour Drawing by WILLIAM BLAKE 27

THE CIRCLE OF THE THIEVES. After the rare Engraving by WILLIAM BLAKE 31

DANTE AND VIRGIL CLIMBING THE FOOT OF THE MOUNTAIN OF PURGATORY . . . . . } After unpublished Water-Colour Drawings by WILLIAM BLAKE . 35

DANTE, VIRGIL, AND STATIUS . . . . . } . 39

A FRONTISPIECE TO BALZAC'S "LA FILLE AUX YEUX D'OR." A Wood Engraving after an unpublished Crayon Drawing by CHARLES CONDER 43

A FAIR AT CHARTRES. After a Pen-and-Ink Drawing by JOSEPH PENNELL 78

A VIGNETTE . . } By WILLIAM T. HORTON { 85
A CUL-DE-LAMPE } { 86

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BEAUTY'S HOUR

A PHANTASY

CHAPTER I

REMEMBER very well the first time the strange thing happened to me: on a winter's day in January. I reached home tired, and sat down in front of the looking-glass to take off my hat; and remained looking, as I so often do, at my own unsatisfactory face.

Gerald Harman had come up to his mother's study that afternoon, while I was at work after lunch; ostensibly on business; really, because there was a frost which had driven him from Leicestershire to London, leaving him with nothing to do; and we had begun talking of irrelevant matters.

"A woman must be good," he said reflectively.

"Only a plain woman," said I. "Who has been behaving ill now?"

"I was generalizing; or, to be frank, I was thinking of Bella Sturgis."

"So am I. You surely don't expect her to possess all the virtues, *and* that face?"

"To be sure, the face is enough," answered he; and sat staring full at me; but thinking, as I knew, of Bella Sturgis.

"Does she amuse you?" I asked.

"Amuse me?" said Gerald. "I'm sure I can't say. One doesn't think about being amused when one is with her."

"She just exists, and that's enough," I suggested.

Possibly my voice was ironical; for Gerald looked at me then, with a sort of jerk.

"She's not intellectual, and she's not really sympathetic, and I don't *like* her one quarter as much as I do you, Mary," said he.

Now it is an understood thing that he is not to call me Mary; and so I reminded him; but he only answered that we had been over the ground

before, and that it was time I owned myself defeated. I was beginning to remark that nothing short of death would induce me to do so, when Lady Harman came in, and Gerald was somewhat abruptly dismissed.

"I wish that idle, mischievous boy would marry Bella, and settle down," said she.

"Yes," said I, and went on writing.

"Why, Mary, how ill you look!" she cried then. "Is anything the matter?"

I hate being told I look ill; it only means that I look ugly: but I answered cheerfully, "Nothing in the world;" and she, being easily satisfied, went off to another subject, which lasted till it was time for me to go away. The post of secretary to Lady Harman was not altogether a bed of roses: she has a wide range of interests, and a soft heart; but her other faculties are not quite in proportion. I was generally weary, by the time I reached home, with the endeavour to reconcile her promises and her practice in the eyes of the world—that most censorious of worlds, the philanthropic.

I repeated Gerald's words as I sat before the glass in my bedroom. "To be sure, the face is enough," he had said.

My own face, pale, with no salient points to make it even impressively ugly, gave me back the speech as I uttered it. I have neither eyelashes, nor distinction; I do not look clever, or even amiable; my figure is not worthy of the name; and my hands and feet are hopeless.

The concentrated bitterness of years swept over me; I loved Gerald Harman, as Bella Sturgis, with her perfect face, was incapable of loving; but my love was rendered grotesque by the accident of birth which had made me an unattractive woman. Given beauty, or even the personal fascination, which so often persuades one that it is beauty, I could have held my own against the world, in spite of my poverty, my lack of friends, or of social position. As things were, I saw myself condemned to a sordid monotony; ever at a disadvantage; cheated of my youth, and of nearly all life's sweeter possibilities. I was considered clever, by the Harmans, it is true; but the world in general, had it noticed me at all, would have refused to believe that such a face as mine could harbour brains. Gerald, I knew, had proclaimed in the family that Mary Gower had wits; and looked on me as his own special discovery: for though I had but a plain head on my shoulders, it was an accurate thinking machine; and could occasionally produce a phrase worthy of his laughter.

I have a certain dreary sense of humour which prevents my being, as a

rule, quite overwhelmed by this aspect of my life; but on the January afternoon of which I write, I was fairly mastered by it; and when Miss Whateley came up to light the gas, which she generally did herself, she found me with my head on the dressing-table, in an attitude of abject despair. Miss Whateley was my landlady; and had been my governess in better days.

"My dear," said she, "what's the matter?"

"Only my face," said I.

"Glycerine is the best thing," said she, and began pulling the curtains.

She knew perfectly well what I meant.

"Whatty," said I, musingly, "how different my life would be if I were a pretty woman—though only for a few hours out of the twenty-four."

"Oh, yes," she answered. "Yet you might be glad sometimes when the hours were over."

I only shook my head; and fell to looking into my own eyes again, with the yearning, stronger than it had ever been before, rising like a passion into my face.

Then something unforeseen happened: Miss Whateley, standing behind me, saw it; and I saw it myself as in a dream. My reflected face grew blurred, and then faded out; and from the mist there grew a new face, of wonderful beauty; the face of my desire. It looked at me from the glass, and when I tried to speak, its lips moved too. Miss Whateley uttered a sound that was hardly a cry, and caught me by the shoulder.

"Mary—Mary—" she said.

I got up then and faced her; she was white as death, and her eyes were almost vacant with terror.

"What has happened?" said I.

My voice was the same; but when I glanced down at my body, I saw that it also had undergone transformation. It struck me, in the midst of my immense surprise, as being curious that I should not be afraid. No explanation of the miracle offered itself to me; none seemed necessary: an effort of will had conquered the power of my material conditions, and I controlled them; my body fitted to my soul at last.

"I'm going mad!" cried poor Miss Whateley.

"We can't both be mad," said I. "Don't be afraid; tell me what I look like."

"You are perfectly beautiful," she gasped.

I began walking up and down the room: I was much taller, and my dress hung clear of my ankles; when I noticed that, I began to laugh.

"Whatty, I've grown," I cried out.

She sat down. "Do you feel strange?" she asked.

"Just the same; only a little larger for my clothes. What are we going to do? Will it last?"

"I think you had better just sit down again, and wish yourself back."

"Never, never. If beautiful I can be, beautiful I will remain. Let us put down the hour and the date."

I took up my diary, and made a great cross against the day; then I noticed that the sun set at twenty-seven minutes past four; it was now twenty-five minutes to five.

"I wonder what we can do to prove to ourselves that we've not been dreaming, if I go back again?" I questioned.

"Let us first spend the evening as usual," answered Miss Whateley. "I will tell Jane that you are out, and that a young lady is coming to supper with me."

Jane was our one servant: her powers of observation were limited; and we did not think it would be difficult to deceive her. So the stranger, whose appearance seemed to bereave her of even her usual small allowance of sense, sat that night at Miss Whateley's table; at ten o'clock we slipped up to my bedroom; and when Jane's tread was heard in the room above, we breathed freely.

"She's gone to bed," said I. "Now we can brew tea, and keep ourselves awake. We must not sleep; that is imperative."

We did not sleep; though to poor Miss Whateley, who had no sense of a triumphant new personality to sustain her, the task must have been difficult.

Then, suddenly, at the hour of sunrise, I felt a sensation as of being in darkness, in thick cloud; from which I emerged with my beauty fallen from me like a garment.

We neither of us said anything. I was conscious only of a physical craving for rest and sleep, which overpowered me: I think Miss Whateley was struck dumb in the presence of a wonder she could not understand. We kissed one another silently; and I went to bed and slept for a couple of hours, a dreamless sleep.

CHAPTER II

When I reached Lady Harman's that morning, I found the two girls, Clara and Betty, alone in their mother's study.

Betty, with the face of a Romney, and the manners of an engaging child, is wholly attractive: Clara is handsome too; she rather affects a friendship with me on intellectual grounds, which bores me: her theories are the terror of my life, being always in direct opposition to my own, for which I have to try and account.

But on this particular morning she had nothing more momentous on her mind than a dance, which her mother was giving the next evening.

"You *must* come to it," Betty cried. "It will be such fun talking it over afterwards. Onlookers always see most of the game, you know."

"You are very kind, Betty," I said. They had long ago insisted that I should call them by their Christian names. "Has it ever struck you that onlookers would sometimes like to be in the game, instead of outside it?"

Betty looked a little confused.

"Well, somebody must look on," said she. "And it 's lucky when they see how funny things are; as you always do, Mary."

"Is there any particular game going on just now?" I inquired. "Can I be of any use?"

"There's Bella," said both girls.

I was very anxious to know the precise sum of Bella's iniquities. I shoved away my papers with an entire lack of conscience; and sat expectant.

"Of course Bella is very young," Clara began: she being about twenty-one herself. "One mustn't judge her too hardly."

"Has she been doing anything you would not have done yourself?" I asked.

Betty looked at me, and raised her eyebrows. Clara was apt to pose as an example to her younger sister.

"Well," said Clara, "*if* I were engaged to some one as nice as Gerald, and handsome, and well off, and all the rest of it, I don't think I'd encourage a little wretch like Mr. Trench."

Clara's social ethics are of a wonderful simplicity.

"Because you'd think it wrong?" I suggested.

"Well—so silly," said Clara.

"I think Bella has a perfect right to do as she likes," broke in Betty.

"She 's *not* engaged to Gerald; he hasn't proposed to her; and he ought to, for she 's awfully fond of him."

"I agree with you both," said I. "Miss Sturgis is silly, but not altogether to be blamed. Am I to observe her and Mr. Trench together, and report the phases of the flirtation to you?"

Yes: that was what they wanted.

"Do you seriously think I'm coming to your dance?" I went on. "Why, I haven't got a dress, or a face fit to show in a ball-room; and I've not been to a ball for years."

They fought this statement inch by inch: they would lend me a dress; my face didn't matter; and after all, I was only twenty-eight, not really old. I ended the discussion by promising to go; for an idea had flashed into my mind, that made me dizzy.

Supposing the other, the beautiful Mary, renewed her existence again that evening, might she not enjoy a strange, a brief triumph? Would there not be a perfect, though a secret pleasure in seeing the look in Gerald Harman's eyes, in surprising the altered tones of his voice? For beauty drew him like a magnet.

I fell into such a deep silence over this thought, that Clara and Betty grew weary, and went away; and I did not see them again till luncheon-time.

There were three visitors: the man who was in love with Betty, and the man with whom Betty was in love; the juxtaposition of the two always delighted me: I don't believe they hated one another; but each believing himself to be the favoured lover, had a fine scorn for the other's folly. The third guest was Bella Sturgis.

Gerald sat at the end of the table, opposite his mother. As I have said, the frost kept him from hunting, and he was disconsolate. With him, as with many finely bred, finely tempered Englishmen, sport was a passion; more, a religion. He put into his hunting, his shooting, his cricket, all the ardour, all the sincerity that are necessary to achievement: I respected this in him, even while it moved me to a kind of pity; for I felt instinctively that though he might have skill and courage to overcome physical difficulties or danger, he was totally unfitted to cope with the more subtile side of life; and would be helpless in the face of an emotional difficulty. On this day of which I write, he was evidently suffering from some jar to the even tenour of his life; of which the continued frost was a merely superficial aggravation.

By his side sat Bella Sturgis: I looked at her with a more critical eye than usual: she had a great air of languid distinction; everything about her was

perfect; from the pose of her head to the intonation of her voice. She very rarely looked at me, and I don't think she had ever clearly realized who I was: I felt sure Gerald had not imparted his discoveries to her with regard to my wits. I never spoke at luncheon when she was there.

But to-day, the memory of that face in the glass the night before, made me reckless and audacious.

"I've been constituted the girl's special reporter to-morrow night," said I to Gerald. "I am to observe the faces, and the flirtations."

"Then you may constitute yourself my special reporter too," said he, gloomily.

"It will be the next best thing to dancing," I went on.

"Why don't you dance?" Miss Sturgis asked, lifting her eyes, and looking at me for an instant.

I confess I was a little surprised at the cleverness of her thrust.

"Because nobody asks me," I said, with a smile.

My candour had no effect on her: she turned to Gerald with an air that dismissed the whole subject. I noticed that he would hardly answer her; and I supposed that the breach between them had widened. So she addressed herself to the man with whom Betty was in love; thereby throwing the table into a state of suppressed agitation; with the exception of Lady Harman, who professed to notice none of the details of domestic life: she left such things to the girls, or the servants; and devoted herself to the care of people in Billingsgate, or in the Tropics, who had need of her, she said. But she was really kind; and always had a joint for lunch, "because it was Mary's dinner;" and though I often yearned for the other more interesting dishes, I never dared to suggest any deviation from beef and mutton: to-day it was mutton.

"Won't you have some more?" said Lady Harman. "I can't help thinking how much we waste. Some of my poor families would be so glad of this, and here's only Mary touches it."

"Oh, mother," said Betty, "your poor people are always starving; and a leg more or less wouldn't make much difference."

"What's an arm or a leg, compared with a face?" said the young man who was in love with Betty, with his eyes fixed on her. His remark had no direct bearing on the subject, which he had but half followed; and it sent her into a fit of suppressed laughter, with which Clara remonstrated in an undertone.

"I don't care," said the rebellious Betty. "It's Gerald's house, and as long as he doesn't mind my giggling, I shall giggle."

"I mind nothing," said the master of the house. His mood was obviously overcast. I saw Bella throw a look at him out of her deep eyes; the eyes of a woman who has always lived under emotional conditions. I began to realize dimly what such conditions might be like.

He got up, and pushed his chair from the table.

"Will you excuse me," said he. "I have an engagement."

"Do go," said Lady Harman, "you are always late, Gerald. I'm sure you ought to go at once."

Bella held out her hand to him.

"It 's *au revoir*, not good-bye," said he, and did not take it.

That evening my transformation took place again; under the same conditions of ardent desire on my part.

"To-morrow," said I to Miss Whateley, "I shall go to the Harman's ball in the character of Mary Hatherley." Hatherley had been my mother's maiden name.

"But you have no dress," said Miss Whateley. "And how can you account for yourself?"

"I must do it," I cried. "You must think of some plan."

"Let us go," said she, "to Dr. Trefusis."

CHAPTER III

Dr. Trefusis was the only man who had ever loved me. He was my father's great friend; but I feel sure he must once have been in love with my mother; at least, I can only account for his great affection for myself, on some such sentimental hypothesis. When my father died, four years ago, and I was involved in money difficulties, it was Dr. Trefusis who took me in, and eventually got me my secretaryship with Lady Harman. He wanted me to share his home; but this I refused to do; believing that his affection for me would not stand the test of losing his liberty, and his solitude.

When we reached his house, he was out; and we waited some time in the library.

"He won't believe us," Miss Whateley kept saying; and this seemed so likely, that I was shivering with nervousness when he at last came in.

"You won't believe it," said Miss Whateley, "but this is Mary Gower."

He looked very blank ; but recovering his presence of mind, turned to me and said,

" A cousin, I presume, of my old friend, Mary Gower ? "

" Oh, Dr. Trefusis," cried I, " we have come to you with the most extraordinary story : don't you know my voice ? I *am* Mary ; but I have got into another body."

" The voice is Mary's," said he, in the tone of one balancing evidence.

Then Miss Whateley began telling him what had happened : while I sat in silence, watching the mixture of wonder and scepticism on his face. I noticed also another look, when his eyes met mine, a look that was almost devout—he had always been a worshipper of beauty.

When the story was done, he began asking questions : my answers seemed unsatisfactory : we sat at last without speaking, while he looked at me, and drummed on the table.

" You are very plausible people," he said, at length ; " but you can't expect me to believe all this ; though I'm at a loss to imagine why you should take the trouble to play such a practical joke on a poor old fellow like myself. Still, I'll not be ungracious, and grumble ; for it has given me a great deal of pleasure to see anything so charming in this dull place."

He got up, as though he wished to end the interview.

I was in despair : his determination not to recognize me struck like a blow at my sense of identity : then the thought came : could I, by a supreme effort of will, induce a transformation under his very eyes ?

I held out my right hand—long and beautiful ; with delicate fingers, that yet were full of nervous strength.

" That," said I, " is not the hand of Mary Gower." He shrugged his shoulders.

" It is not," said he.

" Look at it," I cried.

Then came an awful moment during which I concentrated my whole will in a passion of energy ; the room went black ; I was dimly conscious that Dr. Trefusis had fallen on his knees by the table ; and was watching the hand I held under the lamp, with suspended breath : for it had begun to change ; some subtile difference passed over it, like a cloud over the face of the sun : its beauty of line and colour faded ; the long fingers shrunk, and widened ; the blue-veined whiteness darkened into a coarser tint ; the fine nails lost their shape, and grew ugly, stunted, and opaque.

Dr. Trefusis spoke no word : I felt his fingers were ice-cold as he turned

up my sleeve, and noted how the coarsened wrist grew into the perfect arm; he held my hand, and swung it to and fro; then he left the room abruptly, saying "don't move."

I sat still at the table: Miss Whateley came and stood by me.

"Mary," she said, "it must be wrong; it is playing with some terrible power you don't understand."

"Probably we've all got it," I answered dreamily. "It is perhaps a spark of the creative force—but Dr. Trefusis and all his science won't be able to explain it."

Then the doctor came back, with instruments, and microscopes, and I know not what, and began to examine the miracle. At last he looked up at me.

"I can make nothing of it," said he. "But it is the hand of Mary Gower. That is beyond dispute. Now let it go back."

He held it in his own: this time the change was quicker; and he dropped it with a shudder.

"Now do you believe me?" I asked.

He answered, "yes;" and sat lost in thought.

"You had better go home now," he said presently. "I must think over all this; there must be some hypothesis—miracles don't happen—you must let me see you every day."

I never have understood, and never shall understand, the scientific theories which he had first built up, in order to account for what had happened to me. I was grateful for the curiosity and interest that my case roused in him, because they led him to help me in practical ways; but any attempt at a scientific explanation of the mystery struck me as being irrelevant, and not particularly interesting. This attitude on my part at once amused, and irritated him; he gave up trying to make me understand the meaning of his investigations; and of the experiments which he made me try; for it was not till later, that he came to look upon the matter as beyond any scientific solution; and only to be accounted for on grounds which he would at first have rejected with scorn.

I pass these things over; because I could not write of them intelligibly, and I might be doing Dr. Trefusis some injustice by an imperfect exposition.

On this occasion, I burst in suddenly, and scattered his reflections by declaring that I must go to the Harman's ball the next night, in my new character.

The idea seemed to divert him.

"Ha!" said he. "Mary Gower wants to taste the sweets of success, does she! Upon my soul, it would be worth seeing you, my dear. But it would be difficult to account for the sudden rising of such a star."

"Not if you took me, and chaperoned, and uncled me," I said.

He took a turn or two in the room.

"Why not?" he said then, with a laugh.

"Oh, Dr. Trefusis, would you really!" I cried out, and seized him by both hands.

He held them and looked at me oddly; he is a man of nearly sixty, and my old friend; so I could not be angry when he bent down and kissed me.

"I would do anything for a pretty woman," said he.

I felt a sudden pang: this was the first tribute offered to my beauty, and it hurt. Was Mary Gower beginning already to be jealous of Mary Hatherley?

We settled the matter, with jests and laughter. Dr. Trefusis has the spirit of a child, and the capacity for making abrupt transitions from the serious to the absurd; and he now entered into the plot as though it were a game; as though nothing had happened to unnerve and startle him but a short time before. I was to be his niece, a niece from the country; if further inquiries were made, and my non-appearance during the day had to be accounted for, I was to be a devoted art student; an eccentric; who gave her days to painting, and her evenings to pleasure. Miss Whateley's faint objections were soon silenced: we parted with a promise to meet the next morning; when the Harman household would be upset and I should not be wanted; to choose a ball dress.

"Not that that face of yours needs any artificial setting," were his last words.

"I only hope you won't repent all this," were Miss Whateley's, as we went up to bed.

CHAPTER IV

My father had taken me, as a young girl, to balls: I had sat out unnoticed, but observant; and it had seemed to me that, under apparently artificial conditions, women grouped themselves into three distinct types; which were almost primitive in their lack of complexity. The beauty; the woman whose claims to beauty are not universally acknowledged; and the plain woman.

The beauty always pleased me the most: she was unconscious; using her divine right of sovereignty with a carelessness only possible to one born in the purple; experience had bred in her a certainty of pleasing that made her indifferent to the effect she produced; which indifference made her the more effective. That she had her secret moments of scorn, I never doubted; a scorn of that lust of the eye which held her beauty too dear; and I wondered whether any such woman had ever felt tempted in some moment of outraged emotion, to curse the loveliness that men loved, careless of the heart, or head.

The woman with disputable claims annoyed me: she seemed to me like a queen dependent on the humour of the mob, from whose brows the uneasy crown might be torn, and trampled under foot; and then replaced at a caprice. She was uncertain of herself; too much affected by the opinions of others to be easy or unconscious. I was sorry for her too; I felt sure that she often married the man who thought her beautiful, out of gratitude; for she was always unduly grateful; her attitude towards the world being one of mingled depreciation and assertion.

As for the plain woman, had I not stood hand in hand with her outside the gates of Paradise all my life, the angel with the two-edged sword looking on us, with eyes that held both pity and satire! Oh, kind angel—stand aside, and let us look through the bars, and see gracious figures going to and fro; and listen to strange music, and to the sound of voices moved by a keen, sweet passion. We look; we fall back; and know the angel by his several names: Fate: Injustice: Mercy.

I had always recognized the subtile emotional intoxicant that is distilled from the atmosphere of a ball-room. It seemed to come in great waves about me, as I walked up the Harman's ball-room, followed by Dr. Trefusis.

He had written for permission to bring his niece, and they were prepared to see me. No, I am wrong; they were not prepared. Lady Harman was visibly taken aback; and Clara and Betty had something deferential in their manner, which showed a desire to be unusually pleasing. Then Gerald came forward. His eyes met mine, with the look of one who sees something he has long sought, and despaired of finding.

"Can you spare me a dance—" he asked, pausing at the name.

"My name is Hatherley," said I.

My voice struck him; he glanced at me with a puzzled expression, and hesitated—for a moment.

"I must have more than one," he said.

That was so like Gerald, I nearly laughed.

"The page is blank, you see," I answered.

He took advantage of my remark, and wrote his name several times in my programme. I have the programme still.

Dancing had begun again: a crowd had emerged from the stairs and the anterooms. A number of men were introduced to me; some of whom I had already seen at the house. The first with whom I danced was a Colonel Weston; I knew him, on Betty's authority, to be a beautiful dancer, but he was a head shorter than I, and I smiled involuntarily when he said, "Shall we dance?"

He caught my smile.

"Why are you so divinely tall, O daughter of the gods?" said he. "And from what Olympian height have you descended this evening? Why have I never met you before?"

"I will answer no questions," said I, "till we have danced. My feet ache to begin."

"Then they don't dance on Olympus?"

"The gods must come among the mortals to make merry," I said.

"For which thing let us be thankful," he answered. Then we moved away: I had been hitherto a bad dancer, but to-night I felt a spirit in my feet; and realized, for the first time, the mysterious joy of perfect motion. As we paused near the door, I saw Bella Sturgis coming slowly up the stairs. She did not take her eyes off me; I saw her question the man on whose arm she was leaning; but he looked at me, without answering. It was a revelation, that look in their eyes; I saw it repeated, in other faces, over and over again, as I walked slowly across the ball-room after the dance was over.

The next was with Gerald: my pulses beat thickly, and I was hardly conscious of the outside world, till we stopped dancing, and he led me into a little room, which I did not at the moment recognize as Lady Harman's study.

"And so I have met you at last," he said; and I asked him what he meant.

"Yours is the face I have been looking for all my life," he answered.

There was a strange simplicity in his voice, and words; as though he spoke on an impulse that overruled all conventions, all fear of offence.

"But what of the woman behind the face?" I questioned.

"Can I ever hope to know her?"

"If you know her, you will be disappointed: she is like any other woman."

He shook his head.

"I don't believe it. Tell me what she is really like."

I looked round vaguely, my thoughts intent on what I should say to him: then I suddenly noticed the pictures on the walls, and remembered that this was the room in which Mary Gower sat every day.

"She is not without heart, and she has a head that can think," said I.

"That is not like every other woman."

"Would you credit her with either, if she had another face?" I asked him.

Something in my voice struck him, for the second time; he looked at me, with a quickened attention.

"The face is an indication of the soul, surely," he answered.

"That is a lie," said I. "A lie invented to cover the injustice done alike to the beautiful woman, and the woman who is not beautiful."

"Injustice?" he echoed.

"The thing is so simple," said I, with a bitterness I could not hide. "You place beauty on a pedestal; her face is an index to her soul, you say: what happens if you find she does not possess the soul, which she never claimed to have, but which you insisted on crediting her with? You dethrone her with ignominy. The case of the other woman is as hard: she has a face that does not attract you, so you deny her the soul that you forced on the other one. She goes through life, branded; not by individuals, I allow, but by public opinion. The *vox populi* is the voice of nature, 'tis true; but nature is very hard, very ruthless."

I stopped: Gerald sat looking at me, with a rapt gaze, but I saw he had not listened to a word I said. The Hungarian band had begun playing again in the ball-room. As I listened, and watched the phantastic whirl of the dancers through the open door, they seemed to me to symbolize the burden of all the ages: desire and satiety; illusion and reality; dancing hand in hand, to a music wild and tender as love; sad and stern as life: partners that look ever in one another's eyes, and dance on, in despite of what they see.

"Let us go and dance too," said Gerald.

I have no very clear recollection of the rest of that evening: there was unreality in the air, and a glamour, and an aching pain. Men and women said gracious things to me; yet seemed to watch me with cruel faces; I was only conscious, at the last, of an imperative desire to fly, to hide myself, to escape even from Gerald's presence; and to be alone.

O. SHAKESPEAR.

(*To be continued.*)

WILLIAM BLAKE AND HIS ILLUSTRATIONS TO THE DIVINE COMEDY

II. HIS OPINIONS ON DANTE

AS Blake sat bent over the great drawing-book, in which he made his designs to "The Divine Comedy," he was very certain that he and Dante represented spiritual states which face one another in an eternal enmity. Dante, because a great poet, was "inspired by the Holy Ghost"; but his inspiration was mingled with a certain philosophy, blown up out of his age, which Blake held for mortal and the enemy of immortal things, and which from the earliest times has sat in high places and ruled the world. This philosophy was the philosophy of soldiers, of men of the world, of priests busy with government, of all who, because of their absorption in active life, have been persuaded to judge and to punish; and partly also, he admitted, the philosophy of Christ; who, in descending into the world, had to take on the world; who, in being born of Mary, a symbol of the law in Blake's symbolic language, had to "take after his mother," and drive the money-changers out of the Temple. Opposed to this was another philosophy, not made by men of action, drudges of time and space, but by Christ when wrapped in the divine essence, and by artists and poets, who are taught by the nature of their craft to sympathize with all living things, and who, the more pure and fragrant is their lamp, pass the further from all limitations, to come at last to forget good and evil in an absorbing vision of the happy and the unhappy. The one philosophy was worldly, and established for the ordering of the body and the fallen will, and, so long as it did not call its "laws of prudence" "the laws of God," was a necessity, because "you cannot have liberty in this world without what you call moral virtue"; the other was divine, and established for the peace of the imagination and the unfallen will, and, even when obeyed with a too literal reverence, could make men sin against no higher principality than prudence. He called the followers of the first

philosophy pagans, no matter by what name they knew themselves; because the pagans, as he understood the word pagan, believed more in the outward life, and in what he called "war, princedom, and victory," than in the secret life of the spirit: and the followers of the second philosophy Christians, because only those whose sympathies had been enlarged and instructed by art and poetry could obey the Christian command of unlimited forgiveness. Blake had already found this "pagan" philosophy in Swedenborg, in Milton, in Wordsworth, in Sir Joshua Reynolds, in many persons, and it had roused him so constantly and to such angry paradox, that its overthrow became the signal passion of his life, and filled all he did and thought with the excitement of a supreme issue. Its kingdom was bound to grow weaker so soon as life began to lose a little in crude passion and naïve tumult; but Blake was the first to announce its successor, and he did this, as must needs be with revolutionists who also have "the law" for "mother," with so firm a conviction that the things his opponents held white were indeed black, and the things they held black indeed white; with so strong a persuasion that all busy with government are men of darkness and "something other than human life"; with such a fluctuating fire of stormy paradox, that his phrases seem at times to foreshadow those French mystics who have taken upon their shoulders the overcoming of all existing things, and say their prayers "to Lucifer, son of the morning, derided of priests and of kings." The kingdom that was passing was, he held, the kingdom of the Tree of Knowledge; the kingdom that was coming was the kingdom of the Tree of Life: men who ate from the Tree of Knowledge wasted their days in anger against one another, and in taking one another captive in great nets; men who sought their food among the green leaves of the Tree of Life condemned none but the unimaginative and the idle, and those who forget that even love and death and old age are an imaginative art.

In these opposing kingdoms is the explanation of the petulant sayings he wrote on the margins of the great sketch-book, and of those others, still more petulant, which Crabb Robinson has treasured in his diary. The sayings about the forgiveness of sins have no need of further explanation, and are in contrast with the attitude of that excellent commentator, Herr Hettinger, who, though Dante swooned from pity at the tale of Francesca, will only "sympathize" with her "to a certain extent," being taken in a theological net. "It seems as if Dante," Blake wrote, "supposes God was something superior to the Father of Jesus; for if he gives rain to the evil and the good, and his sun to the just and the unjust, he can never have builded Dante's Hell, nor the Hell of the Bible,

HELL

as our parsons explain it. It must have been framed by the dark spirit itself, and so I understand it." And again, "Whatever task is of vengeance and whatever is against forgiveness of sin is not of the Father but of Satan, the accuser, the father of Hell." And again, and this time to Crabb Robinson, "Dante saw devils where I saw none. I see good only." "I have never known a very bad man who had not something very good about him." This forgiveness was not the forgiveness of the theologian who has received a commandment from afar off; but of the mystical artist-legislator who believes he has been taught, in a mystical vision, that "the imagination is the man himself," and believes he has discovered in the practice of his art, that without a perfect sympathy there is no perfect imagination, and therefore no perfect life. At another moment he called Dante, "an atheist, a mere politician busied about this world, as Milton was, till, in his old age, he returned to God whom he had had in his childhood." "Everything is atheism," he had already explained, "which assumes the reality of the natural and unspiritual world." Dante, he held, assumed its reality when he made obedience to its laws the condition of man's happiness hereafter, and he set Swedenborg beside Dante in misbelief for calling Nature, "the ultimate of Heaven," a lowest rung, as it were, of Jacob's ladder, instead of a net woven by Satan to entangle our wandering joys and bring our hearts into captivity. There are certain curious unfinished diagrams scattered here and there among the now separated pages of the sketch-book, and of these there is one which, had it had all its concentric rings filled with names, would have been a systematic exposition of his animosities, and of their various intensity. It represents Paradise, and in the midst, where Dante emerges from the earthly Paradise, is written, "Homer," and in the next circle, "Swedenborg," and on the margin these words: "Everything in Dante's Paradise shows that he has made the earth the foundation of all, and its goddess Nature, memory," memory of sensation, "not the Holy Ghost. . . . Round Purgatory is Paradise, and round Paradise vacuum. Homer is the centre of all, I mean the poetry of the heathen." The statement that round Paradise is vacuum is a proof of the persistence of his ideas and of his curiously literal understanding of his own symbols; for it is but another form of the charge made against Milton many years before in "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell." "In Milton the Father is destiny, the son a ratio of the five senses," Blake's definition of the reason which is the enemy of the imagination, "and the Holy Ghost vacuum." Dante, like the Kabalists, symbolized the highest order of created beings by the fixed stars, and God by the darkness beyond them, the *Primum Mobile*.

Blake, absorbed in his very different vision, in which God took always a human shape, believed that to think of God under a symbol drawn from the outer world was in itself idolatry; but that to imagine Him as an unpeopled immensity was to think of Him under the one symbol furthest from His essence; it being a creation of the ruining reason, "generalizing" away "the minute particulars of life." Instead of seeking God in the deserts of time and space, in exterior immensities, in what he called "the abstract void," he believed that the further he dropped behind him memory of time and space, reason builded upon sensation, morality founded for the ordering of the world; and the more he was absorbed in emotion; and, above all, in emotion escaped from the impulse of bodily longing and the restraints of bodily reason, in artistic emotion; the nearer did he come to Eden's "breathing garden," to use his beautiful phrase, and to the unveiled face of God. No worthy symbol of God existed but the inner world, the true humanity, to whose various aspects he gave many names, "Jerusalem," "Liberty," "Eden," "The Divine Vision," "The Body of God," "The Human Form Divine," "The Divine Members," and whose most intimate expression was Art and Poetry. He always sang of God under this symbol:

For Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love
  Is God Our Father dear;
And Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love
  Is man, His child and care.

For Mercy has a human heart;
  Pity a human face;
And Love, the human form divine,
  And Peace, the human dress.

Then every man of every clime,
  That prays in his distress,
Prays to the human form divine—
  Love, Mercy, Pity, Peace.

Whenever he gave this symbol a habitation in space he set it in the sun, the father of light and life; and set in the darkness beyond the stars, where light and life die away, Og and Anak and the giants that were of old, and the iron throne of Satan.

By thus contrasting Blake and Dante by the light of Blake's paradoxical wisdom, and as though there was no great truth hung from Dante's beam of the balance, I but seek to interpret a little-understood philosophy rather than one incorporate in the thought and habits of Christendom. Every philosophy has half its truth from times and generations; and to us one half

of the philosophy of Dante is less living than his poetry; while the truth Blake preached, and sang, and painted, is the root of the cultivated life, of the fragile perfect blossom of the world born in ages of leisure and peace, and never yet to last more than a little season ; the life those Phæacians—who told Odysseus that they had set their hearts in nothing but in "the dance, and changes of raiment, and love and sleep"—lived before Poseidon heaped a mountain above them ; the lives of all who, having eaten of the tree of life, love, more than the barbarous ages when none had time to live, "the minute particulars of life," the little fragments of space and time, which are wholly flooded by beautiful emotion because they are so little they are hardly of time and space at all. "Every space smaller than a globule of man's blood," he wrote, "opens into eternity of which this vegetable earth is but a shadow." And again, "Every time less than a pulsation of the artery is equal in its tenor and value to six thousand years, for in this period the poet's work is done, and all the great events of time start forth, and are conceived : in such a period, within a moment, a pulsation of the artery." Dante, indeed, taught, in the "Purgatorio," that sin and virtue are alike from love, and that love is from God ; but this love he would restrain by a complex external law, a complex external Church. Blake, upon the other hand, cried scorn upon the whole spectacle of external things, a vision to pass away in a moment, and preached the cultivated life, the internal Church which has no laws but beauty, rapture, and labour. "I know of no other Christianity, and of no other gospel, than the liberty both of body and mind to exercise the divine arts of imagination, the real and eternal world of which this vegetable universe is but a faint shadow, and in which we shall live in our eternal or imaginative bodies when these vegetable mortal bodies are no more. The Apostles knew of no other gospel. What are all their spiritual gifts? What is the divine spirit? Is the Holy Ghost any other than an intellectual fountain? What is the harvest of the gospel and its labours? What is the talent which it is a curse to hide? What are the treasures of heaven which we are to lay up for ourselves? Are they any other than mental studies and performances? What are all the gifts of the gospel, are they not all mental gifts? Is God a spirit who must be worshipped in spirit and truth? And are not the gifts of the spirit everything to man? O ye religious! discountenance every one among you who shall pretend to despise art and science. I call upon you in the name of Jesus! What is the life of man but art and science? Is it meat and drink? Is not the body more than raiment? What is mortality but the things relating to the body which dies? What is immortality but the things

relating to the spirit which lives eternally? What is the joy of Heaven but improvement in the things of the spirit? What are the pains of Hell but ignorance, idleness, bodily lust, and the devastation of the things of the spirit? Answer this for yourselves, and expel from among you those who pretend to despise the labours of art and science, which alone are the labours of the gospel. Is not this plain and manifest to the thought? Can you think at all, and not pronounce heartily that to labour in knowledge is to build Jerusalem, and to despise knowledge is to despise Jerusalem and her builders? And remember, he who despises and mocks a mental gift in another, calling it pride, and selfishness, and sin, mocks Jesus, the giver of every mental gift, which always appear to the ignorance-loving hypocrites as sins. But that which is sin in the sight of cruel man is not sin in the sight of our kind God. Let every Christian as much as in him lies engage himself openly and publicly before all the world in some mental pursuit for the building of Jerusalem." I have given the whole of this long passage, because, though the very keystone of his thought, it is little known, being sunk, like nearly all of his most profound thoughts, in the mysterious prophetic books. Obscure about much else, they are always lucid on this one point, and return to it again and again. "I care not whether a man is good or bad," are the words they put into the mouth of God, "all that I care is whether he is a wise man or a fool. Go put off holiness and put on intellect." This cultivated life, which seems to us so artificial a thing, is really, according to them, the laborious re-discovery of the golden age, of the primeval simplicity, of the simple world in which Christ taught and lived, and its lawlessness is the lawlessness of Him "who being all virtue acted from impulse, and not from rules,"

> And his seventy disciples sent
> Against religion and government.

The historical Christ was indeed no more than the supreme symbol of the artistic imagination, in which, with every passion wrought to perfect beauty by art and poetry, we shall live, when the body has passed away for the last time; but before that hour man must labour through many lives and many deaths. "Men are admitted into heaven, not because they have curbed and governed their passions, but because they have cultivated their understandings. The treasures of heaven are not negations of passion, but realities of intellect, from which the passions emanate, uncurbed in their eternal glory. The fool shall not enter into heaven, let him be ever so holy. Holiness is not the price of entering into heaven. Those who are cast out are all those who, having no passions of

their own, because no intellect, have spent their lives in curbing and governing other people's by the various arts of poverty and cruelty of all kinds. The modern Church crucifies Christ with the head downwards. Woe, woe, woe to you hypocrites." After a time man has "to return to the dark valley whence he came and begin his labours anew," but before that return he dwells in the freedom of imagination, in the peace of "the divine image," "the divine vision," in the peace that passes understanding, and is the peace of art. "I have been very near the gates of death," Blake wrote in his last letter, "and have returned very weak and an old man, feeble and tottering, but not in spirit and life, not in the real man, the imagination, which liveth for ever. In that I grow stronger and stronger as this foolish body decays . . . Flaxman is gone and we must all soon follow, everyone to his eternal home, leaving the delusions of goddess Nature and her laws, to get into freedom from all the laws of the numbers," the multiplicity of nature, "into the mind in which everyone is king and priest in his own house." The phrase about the king and priest is a memory of the crown and mitre set upon Dante's head before he entered Paradise. Our imaginations are but fragments of the universal imagination, portions of the universal body of God, and as we enlarge our imagination by imaginative sympathy, and transform, with the beauty and the peace of art, the sorrows and joys of the world, we put off the limited mortal man more and more, and put on the unlimited "immortal man." "As the seed waits eagerly watching for its flower and fruit, anxious its little soul looks out into the clear expanse to see if hungry winds are abroad with their invisible array; so man looks out in tree, and herb, and fish, and bird, and beast, collecting up the fragments of his immortal body into the elemental forms of everything that grows. . . . In pain he sighs, in pain he labours in his universe, sorrowing in birds over the deep, or howling in the wolf over the slain, and moaning in the cattle, and in the winds." Mere sympathy for all living things is not enough, because we must learn to separate their "infected" from their eternal, their satanic from their divine part; and this can only be done by desiring always beauty; the one mask through which can be seen the unveiled eyes of eternity. We must then be artists in all things, and understand that love and old age and death are first among the arts. In this sense, he insists that "Christ's apostles were artists," that "Christianity is Art," and that "the whole business of man is the arts." Dante, who deified law, selected its antagonist, passion, as the most important of sins, and made the regions where it was punished the largest. Blake, who deified imaginative freedom, held "corporeal reason" for the most accursed of things, because it makes the imagination revolt from the sovereignty of beauty and pass under the sovereignty

of corporeal law, and this is "the captivity in Egypt." True art is expressive and symbolic, and makes every form, every sound, every colour, every gesture, a signature of some unanalyzable, imaginative essence. False art is not expressive but mimetic, not from experience, but from observation; and is the mother of all evil, persuading us to save our bodies alive at no matter what cost of rapine and fraud. True art is the flame of the last day, which begins for every man, when he is first moved by beauty, and which seeks to burn all things until they "become infinite and holy."

Blake's distaste for Dante's philosophy did not make him a less sympathetic illustrator, any more than did his distaste for the philosophy of Milton mar the beauty of his illustrations to "Paradise Lost." The illustrations which accompany the present article are, I think, among the finest he ever did, and are certainly faithful to the text of "The Divine Comedy." That of Dante talking with Uberti, and that of Dante in the circle of the thieves, are notable for the flames which, as always in Blake, live with a more vehement life than any mere mortal thing: fire was to him no unruly offspring of human hearths, but the Kabalistic element, one fourth of creation, flowing and leaping from world to world, from hell to hell, from heaven to heaven; no accidental existence, but the only fit signature, because the only pure substance, for the consuming breath of God. In the man, about to become a serpent, and in the serpent, about to become a man, in the second design, he has created, I think, very curious and accurate symbols of an evil that is not violent, but is subtle, finished, plausible. The sea and clouded sun in the drawing of Dante and Virgil climbing among the rough rocks at the foot of the Purgatorial mountain, and the night sea and spare vegetation in the drawing of the sleep of Virgil, Dante and Statius near to its summit, are symbols of divine acceptance, and foreshadow the landscapes of his disciples Calvert, Palmer, and Linnell, famous interpreters of peace.

The faint unfinished figures in the globe of light in the drawing of the sleepers are the Leah and Rachel of Dante's dream, the active and the contemplative life of the spirit, the one gathering flowers, the other gazing at her face in the glass. It is curious that Blake has made no attempt, in these drawings, to make Dante resemble any of his portraits, especially as he had, years before, painted Dante in a series of portraits of poets, of which many certainly tried to be accurate portraits. I have not yet seen this picture, but if it has Dante's face, it will convince me that he intended to draw, in the present case, the soul rather than the

body of Dante, and read "The Divine Comedy" as a vision seen not in the body but out of the body. Both the figures of Dante and Virgil have the slightly feminine look which he gave to representations of the soul.

W. B. YEATS.

"VENITE, DESCENDAMUS"

LET be at last: give over words and sighing,
Vainly were all things said:
Better, at last, to find a place for lying,
Only dead.

Silence were best, with songs and sighing over;
Now be the music mute:
Now let the dead, red leaves of autumn cover
A vain lute!

Silence is best: for ever and for ever,
We will go down to sleep,
Somewhere, beyond her ken, where she need never
Come to weep.

Let be at last: colder she grows, and colder;
Sleep and the night were best;
Lying, at last, where we cannot behold her,
We may rest.

ERNEST DOWSON.

A Frontispiece to

Balzac's "La Fille aux Yeux d'Or"

A Wood Engraving after an unpublished Crayon Drawing

by

Charles Conder

La Fille Aux Yeux D'Or.
By
Honoré de Balzac
Charles Condon. 90

TWO FOOLISH HEARTS

A SCENE OF RUSTIC LIFE

SUMMER had passed, the harvest was ingathered, and the days began to close in.

At the Hill Farm was heard the euphonious boom of the threshing machine. It was music to many in the neighbourhood, but to none more than to the little boy Reggie.

He had become a fixture, so to speak, at the Farm. Since the day when he crept through the hole in the orchard hedge, he had grown to be one of the family. Everybody liked the boy: two on the farm—Letty and Clem—had come to love him.

There is so much to love in a child—his smile, his general prettiness, his bright and often saucy tongue, his way of looking at things, his mode of doing them, and his highly ingenious plan of obtaining his desires. These are some of the arts and charms of child life, and they win, yes, they win—often against the adult's better judgment.

Letty had grown to love the boy as her own. If he had not made his appearance on the Farm just after breakfast, she would go out first into the Croft and then into the Pond Close and call "Reg—gie, Reg—gie," in the same cooing sort of way as she used to call Clem in his childhood; and if the little fellow was within earshot, he would gallop to her and spring into her open arms with a warbling laugh which did the heart good to hear.

He was the revived sweets of old days to Letty; a new bit of colouring on her picture. He was more than this to her sometimes—he was Luce in knickerbockers.

She did not like that fancy so well, though her feeling against Luce was softening through contact with her child. She had not seen Luce, however. Though Reggie had been a daily visitor to the farm since the end of June, and it was now the end of September, the red-haired flame of Clem had not once put in an appearance.

Her Rubens-like beauty had blushed unseen by Letty. She bestowed it chiefly upon her mother in their little cottage in Radbrooke Bottom; it was only at times—in the silent and long summer nights when few people were visible—that she went more than a stone's throw from her home.

The shorter days drew her out more. It was natural that it should be so, though eminently displeasing that so fair a flower should perforce have to exist under a cloud. This angered Clem. Luce at Radbrooke, indoors, and away from him and the farm, was no better than Luce at Brookington.

Many girls, similarly situated to Luce, would have "brazened it out." Luce might, perhaps, have felt less the necessity of hiding herself away from everybody, had she not heard the opinion entertained of her by Letty Martin. She had heard that—and it was sufficient for her to almost nail herself to the table leg in her mother's kitchen.

But now that the days began to be chary of their light towards six o'clock in the evening, Luce began to be a little more prodigal of her presence. Three years ago, or rather more, she used to court the sunlight; now she haunted the shades. To a really pure girl the knowledge of having committed an offence against society, if not against Nature, is all that is needed to bring the blush to the cheek at every awkward or trivial meeting. Luce, though a mother, had by no means lost her purity. In the evening dusk she could blush without detection.

So she sauntered down the garden path on this warm and calm evening at the end of September; on the evening of the annual village wake.

"You baint goin' to the wake, be ye, Luce, lass?" said her mother as she stepped out.

"I should like to go, mother, for sake of the dancin'; but I donna think I will."

"If I was thee, my gel, I should'na. Theer'll be all the village theer, besides Brookington folk; an' summat 'ull be sure to be said 'bout thee. An' as for dancin', Luce—well, you might nor be short o' partners, my gel; but I should'na—no, I should'na."

"I'll walk i' the lane a bit, mother," replied Luce, slowly. "If Reg cries, I'll come in."

"Donna thee fret about little waxwork, deary; I'll see to 'im."

When Luce was out of hearing, Mrs. Cowland wiped a tear out of the corner of her eye, and sighed to herself: "The beautifulest peaches be the fust to goo spect. Poor Luce, beautiful Luce! To think as I should hev 'ad

such a beauty, the envy of all the mothers i' Radbrooke, an' then for she to hev come to this. It breaks me heart when I think on't."

True, honest, motherly instinct is not so common that one can afford to smile at the simple sentiments of Mrs. Cowland. They are rare in humble spheres, far rarer in higher circles. The lowliest flowers are the tenderest, the sweetest, the truest, the purest.

Meanwhile, with a full heart, and a set of confusing thoughts, which seemed born only to be killed, Luce sauntered along the lane.

There were no dwellings eastward beyond Luce's cottage. There was a pond, called "The Green Pond" by the children, on account of its entire surface being covered with a thin green film, on the north side, dangerously near the footpath, and left open for any luckless child to fall into ; there was also a curve in the lane northward ; but no more domiciles.

Beyond Luce's cottage the lane was a pure lane : hedges each side, composed of hawthorn, blackthorn, buckthorn, blackberry, bramble, and elder ; with, at intervals, a tall elm, ash, or oak, whose spreading branches almost shut out the sky from above, and made the lane shady even in the strongest light.

It was a pure lane—a leafy lover's lane.

To-night it wore an intensely delightful aspect. It was moonlit. Few trees grew at the west end, and when the moon reached a certain altitude it shot a ray of effulgence down that avenue-like Warwickshire lane like a light in a railway tunnel. Luce looked like an animated poppy walking through the light into darkness, for the moonrays did not penetrate to the lane's end.

Luce had no intention of going to the wake. There were reasons why she should not. Yet she had implanted in her the natural rustic longing to attend the annual festivity on the green waste near the church.

The wake was a great occasion at Radbrooke : a loved occasion, a merry occasion, and an occasion looked forward to for weeks beforehand. It was the one time of the year when all the villagers and the occupants of the surrounding farms met together for a day's junketting and pleasantry. There were shows, merry-go-rounds, shooting galleries, cocoa-nut throwing, and, to crown all, dancing on the green to the often discordant music of the Brookington band.

These pleasures are rustic, Bohemian if you will ; but they are the natural pleasures of Strephon and Phyllis, and they attract—yes, they attract. They are the sole amusements of the peasant, isolated in his own greenwood ; and though the gaily-painted caravan and roundabout are incongruous ex-

crescences upon the landscape, their coming is an exciting event in the life of the villager.

The roadway or street of the village ran parallel with Radbrooke Bottom, and at its eastward end it sloped southward so decidedly that the lane and the street at that end were not more than twenty yards apart. As Luce stood at the junction the sounds of the blaring music of the roundabouts floated to her ear, mingled with the peals of laughter and the shouts of merry-makers.

She was but a young thing, full of life, and with a taste for enjoyment. She did not intend to take part in the wake, but the alluring sounds of the pleasures provided there drew her feet round the bend of the road to a point where it joined the village street, and commanded a fine view of the motley fair.

What a sight it was, just on the outskirts of silence!

To the contemplative being who stood where Luce was standing, the contrast between the two scenes would have seemed extraordinary, not to say terrible. Two distinct worlds, they were separated from each other only by a few yards. Luce was standing in a silent world, which gave forth no sound; the world before her blazed with light, colour, and movement, and dinned the ears with its noise.

And above the flaming oil-lamps, the madly-circling roundabouts, the wildly dancing people, who seemed never to tire through dance after dance, above the shouts of the showmen, the scream of the steam-whistle, the laugh of the light-hearted, looking down on a scene so foreign to the landscape in which it was set, was the square, lichen-grown tower of the parish church of Radbrooke; looking down with a calm, dignified, and venerable air through its eye-like window upon this saturnalia of village life.

Luce was transfixed at her point of vantage. She never moved an inch more forward, but stood there gazing wistfully at the scene, and especially at the dancers, like one who would have liked to mingle with them, but was too shy to enter. If anyone on the edge of the fair and in its full blaze of light, had looked towards the bend in the road which led downward to Radbrooke Bottom, they would have beheld a lovely young face framed in a garland of red hair, looking out through the darkness—Luce's Rubens-like face.

"Thy partner inna theer, Luce," said a voice in the shadow behind her.

Luce turned quickly round, for she was rather startled, and saw beside her the fine face and large form of Moll Rivers. She, like Luce, was without her hat, and when she came forward and stood on a level with Luce, so that the

light from the fair flashed full upon their faces, the contrast in their appearance was very striking.

Moll with her superb height and mass of raven black hair might have passed for the Queen of Night ; she was in her element, her latitude, her clime —lusty-limbed and strong. Luce, with her smaller stature and red hair could pass for Aurora, the Queen of the Morning. She had the appearance of being out of her element, her latitude, her clime ; she was dainty-limbed and younger in years than Moll.

Both looked at each other curiously and in some confusion. Moll had a melancholy look and a rather untidy air ; the hooks of her bodice were undone, showing a portion of her rounded breasts panting beneath. A cloud of inexpressible weariness sat in her eyes and upon her forehead. She looked tired of living.

" Thy partner inna theer, Luce," she repeated, inclining her head towards the dancers.

" My partner, Molly ? " replied Luce, in some surprise.

" Yes, I've bin all round the wake, in an' out the footers, round the dobby horses, an' by the shooting galleries, an' canna find 'im. Let 's go away."

They turned down the lane into the shadow. Then Luce spoke.

" It seems from what you say, Moll, that you've been lookin' for a partner. I hanna got no partner, an' hanna been seeking for one."

" Maybe you might soon hev 'ad one, Luce ? " returned Moll with a meaning look.

" May be," said Luce, with some attempt at dignity.

" That is if you hanna left yourn behind at Brookington."

It was one of those deadly thrusts often dealt out by uncultured natures. If it had been daylight the beholder would have seen the colour rush headlong into Luce's face and spread all down her neck ; as it was moonlight, the effect of Moll's words was not observed in her face, though her voice shook when she next spoke.

" My business is my business, Moll, if so be it 's at Radbrooke or Brookington. I donna think you ought to trouble yourself about it."

" Perhaps not," said Moll. " I've no call to say anything, I hevn't. I must see all an' say nothing. I mun bear all an' do nothin'."

" I donna know what you mean."

" No, nobody knows what I mean. 'Tis as the parson said in his sarment on Sunday—yes, Miss Luce, I did go to church on Sunday, an' you've no call to look so dubersome, for some folks inna so black as they're painted ; he said

in his sarment as none be so blind as them as wunna see, an' that's it. You know what I mean, you can see what I mean, yet you make believe ye donna know."

Luce did not reply. She was burning and trembling at the same time.

She sauntered quietly on, with the commanding figure of Moll at her side like her elongated shadow. Every now and then they walked out of the darkness into a thin line of moonlight which came through a gap in the trees; then it was seen that both their faces were flushed, and that Moll's in particular had a cloud of anger growing over it.

"You donna speak, Luce?" she went on. "Perhaps you be ashamed to. You were such a good little gell once, an'—I wish I may die if I'm tellin' a lie —I was very fond on thee. But you've turned out a faggot, Luce; yes, a very faggot."

"And pray, what hev I done to thee, Moll, to be called a faggot by thee?"

Luce was nearly breaking down; the vehemence of Moll she had not bargained for. Poor girl, she was receiving punishment for her sin all round—from her own sex. It was first her mother, then Letty Martin, and now Moll. Why was it, she inwardly inquired, that women are so cruel to women? She expected pity and obtained punishment.

A ray of moonlight fell upon her while Moll was in shadow. It glorified her. It even lit up the glistening tears in the corners of her eyes and made them shine like diamonds. Moll looked out of the darkness at her with great admiration.

"Thou art a pretty faggot, Luce, a very pretty faggot; but thou'rt a faggot all the same. I canna wonder at men bein' fond on thee. Giv' me thy hair, Luce, thy bonnie red hair as he be so in love with, an' I'll never call thee a faggot no more."

She caught hold of Luce's hair, and held it by her own, comparing the colours.

"Mine's longer and thicker nor yourn, beautiful hair, inna it? But not showy like yourn. Men like showy things. Then you've got blue eyes, Luce, an' mine be dull an' dark. You're altogether more pretty to look at nor I am. Men like pretty things, little toy things like you, an' I'm big an' bold, an dowdy —no wonder he doesna like me."

She paused a moment, looking steadfastly at Luce.

"But he might hev come to like me, if you had'na turned up here agen like the bad penny that you are. Yes," she added almost fiercely, and with uncontrollable bitterness, "you are a faggot, Luce, else you'd hev stopped at

Brookington with your misgotten brat, an' not come here agen with your winnin' ways, pretty face, an' carrotty hair, to 'ang yourself on Clem agen."

Luce's spirit was bent but not broken. She looked at Moll with an awakening glance and with a flushed and defiant air.

"Oh! I see what you mean now, Molly. You want Clem, an' because I've come back you think you shanna get him. Well, my home 's at Radbrooke. I came home, not to try and win Clem away from you or anyone else, but to try and live in peace."

"You've bewitched 'im—you, another man's light-o'-love."

That epithet again! It stabbed Luce to the heart like a knife.

She had done wrong, she had sinned, she had prayed for forgiveness. Was her punishment never to be completed? Why should she be condemned to be brow-beaten by this girl? Had she not suffered enough in her own heart for her folly, but that she must be let down before every villager and made to ask pardon from them all?

Here was this girl, this Moll Rivers, who was known by all the village to have been many and many a time at the New Inn; she was pointing the finger of scorn at her. And no doubt all the others would do it as well. She had been "the good girl" of the village, the girl who had been cited by the parson as an example of pure and upright girlhood; she had been the belle of Radbrooke: and now she had come to be taunted and insulted by everybody in the parish.

Oh! virtue, virtue, what a severe shape you do assume in such little Bethels as the village of Radbrooke! Luce felt it, bent to it, and broke under it.

"I won't hear you, Moll, I won't hear you," she sobbed, placing her hands to her ears, and taking quicker steps down the lane towards her home. "You are bitter, cruel, and wicked to me. I have done you no wrong; I've done nobody wrong but myself. I have not come back to Radbrooke to 'ang myself on Clem. I don't 'ang myself on him. You know very well I have not bin to the Farm once since I came home."

"But he comes to see thee."

"I canna help it; I canna order him not to come; I canna send him away. It 's too bad on all of you to be at me for comin' back home again. Did you want me to die at Brookington? It seems like it; an' I wish I had, I wish I had. I should have been better off now. An' all on you used to be so fond on me, or said so. Belike all the time you was glad to be shut on me."

"Wunce in awhile I was very fond on thee, Luce; very fond indeed."

Moll was not a bad girl; she had in her the makings of a grand character. Education would not have done it; changed circumstances might. If she had been able to look upon life from a different standpoint, if her life had been a little less hard or her feelings less in opposition to the surroundings of her existence, she might have been held forward as the type of a great-hearted woman.

But Nature had fettered her. She had bound her down to narrow circumstances, and for one strong trait in her character, she had given her six weak ones. Moll was nevertheless a soft-hearted girl—hot, hasty, passionate, and not entirely selfish; yet she was a very woman, full of her mother's milk, ready to cry out one minute and storm the next; ready to sacrifice others to her selfishness, and in turn to sacrifice herself to the selfishness of others.

"Yes," she went on, looking down from her superb height at Luce with a pitying and tender glance, "wunce in a while, Luce, I loved thee well. Doesna remember the day when thou were made the Queen o' May, an' how it come on to drizzle wi' rain? An' how thy mother were afeard for thee, 'cause thou wert a bit nesh an' tisiky i' the chest? Dost mind how I, such a slummock as I were i' my work-a-day clothes, cotched thee up an' covered thee wi' my 'urden apron to keep the wet off on thee, an' carried thee to the housen i' that way, wi'out gettin a spot on thee; an' how, when we went to Letty's, she had all we gels in an' gived us a drop o' beistin's all round?"

"I mind it, Luce, gel," she said sadly, after a pause. "Thou wert as innercent as a cade lamb, an' as pretty as one o' they tulips i' thy mother's gardin. Yea, thou wert as sweet as a little angel then—like one on them round the christening basin i' the church yon."

"Oh! Molly, donna, donna," implored Luce.

"Donna what, Luce?"

"Donna liken me to a angel. I'm not that; I'm not that."

"You was then."

If Luce was stung into anger and bitterness before by the insulting and bold words of Moll, she suffered martyrdom now.

The picture which her companion had drawn of her—no more than a thumb-nail sketch of her as she really was when they made her Queen of the May—brought back with vivid colouring and acute pain the days of her innocence; the days of her purity; and it sufficed to crush her.

It was like looking back on a lost Heaven.

Being blessed or cursed with a sense of the power of goodness and

virtue, Luce saw from what sublime heights she had fallen. The sight overwhelmed her. To the right-thinking mind there is such a gulf between unsullied innocence and sin-stained beauty! Luce saw this and shivered.

"If you liked me then, Moll," she said in a manner exquisitely pretty and touching, "why donna you like me now? I like you just the same."

"I love Clem," replied Moll; that was the answer to everything.

Luce sighed and so did Moll; it was an awkward and painful position for them both. Few positions can be more painful than that in which two girls, associated with each other since childhood, and being fairly fond of one another, are brought to the awkward point of loving the same man.

To quick and pregnant minds which know no other impulses than those given them by bounteous and indiscriminating Nature, there is tragedy in that position. There are elements in it worse and more deadly even than the actual blood-spilling on the village green. There are withered and broken hearts in it; dispositions warped and made ugly; good natures destroyed; warm blood congealed.

This was the position of Moll and Luce, and the influences of it had made themselves felt. Moll had grown ugly and ill-gendered excrescences upon a disposition which, in its natural state, was kind, warm, open, and loving. For her the position was worse and more trying than for Luce; and the Radbrooke field-girl, though unblessed with the cleverness and polish which education is supposed to give, had the discernment to see it.

She loved Clem with a consuming passion which threatened to seriously affect her health, as it had already affected her well-being; she knew also, only too well, that he loved another, and thought no more of her than the lady-smock—typical of her physical elegance—which he crushed beneath his heel in field, croft, and meadow.

The thought, nay, the absolute knowledge of this, was as gall and wormwood to the passionate village girl. Vague fancies arose from the knowledge. She had one fancy that if Luce had not come back, she could in time have moulded Clem to her will. She encouraged this fancy till it became a faith, decided, strong, and durable. Luce had come back; that was the cause of it all. And there she stood beside her, so sweet, pretty, and winning, that even a masculine anger became almost gentleness under her influence.

"I love Clem!"

What could Luce say to that? She had been weak, vain, foolish, and as her own sad heart told her, downright wicked. She had been led astray; she bore about with her the burden of a knowledge that the fidelity of Clem was

of such a quality as to be worth a far better girl than she was—yet there was the awkward fact that Clem had no eyes for any girl but her—that he still loved her as dearly as before her falling away ; and, to crown all, and make the position more painful than ever, there was the fact that *she* loved Clem with a feeling which she could never have for any other man !

" I am so sorry, Moll," she said, simply and earnestly, looking at her companion.

" Art thee so, Luce ? Then perhaps thee 'lt 'elp, lass, in this ill-convenient kaszhulty. I canna abear my life as it be now. I've bin thinkin', Luce, as belike Clem 'ood look on me wi' more favourable eyes if it weren't for thee bein' here. Couldst thee not go rimming to thy uncle's at Rodbridge ? "

Luce did not speak, and Moll paused. The silver light of the moon which now moved from Luce's face and settled upon hers, showed upon it an intensely wearied and helpless expression. Moll looked like one upon whom an inexorable fate had passed sentence of death ; her face was a picture of deeply-rooted, permanent, and melancholy resignation.

" Nay," she said, " I see that wunna do. Two miles apart 'ood be nothin' for 'im to walk o' nights. He'd come an' see thee theer every day arter the work were done. I could'na bear that as much as this. Now I can meet 'im sometimes an' see 'im unbeknown to 'im ; but then I could'na. He'd be entirely away from Radbrooke, an' I should be moilin' mysen to death at not seein' a sight on 'im. No, Luce, 'twood never do for thee to go rimming to thy uncle's at Rodbridge. You mun stay here, such be my unaccountable fortin'."

" But, Luce," she added more quietly, and with a more dejected air, " remember that you be differend to me. I hanna got anythink to love, not a single livin' thing i' the world—not, I mean, i' the way that you love—not the same sort o' love, like as people feels to one another when they be young like as we be. I've got my poor old dad, an' Fan, o' course, but they donna bring the same feeling as what I mean. You've got *'im*, Luce, an' you've got that little cade lamb o' thine as comes on the farm every day like a flash o' sunshine. Remember me then, lass, an' donna let *'im* see thee oftener than be needed, for I shall know it, an' 'twill be 'ard for me to bear, lovin' 'im as I do. Oh ! Luce, Luce, give me thy red hair. Give me— Oh ! why dinna God mek 'im love me instead o' thee ! "

She bent down with the anguish she was enduring, right over the form of Luce, and clasped her big arms round her smaller companion's neck. It was

like a great oak wrapping its shielding limbs round a tender sapling—like Despair clinging to the smallest Hope.

Luce was herself moved to tears.

"I dinna know you loved him like this, Moll. Poor wench, I'll ease it for thee if I can. Yes, I will, lass, I will," and the little red-haired girl there and then formed a resolution, which she was determined to keep, if—if—the power within her lay.

"Luce, Luce!" cried a voice at that moment from the direction of Mrs. Cowland's cottage, "come in, lass, the little 'un's waked up, an' I canna coax 'im off agen."

It was the voice of Luce's mother. As the girls separated from their embrace, Mrs. Cowland in person met them at the foot of the dark stretch of lane.

"What, Molly! Be you wi' Luce, then? Well, 'tis as glorious a night as I've sin for some time, an' you canna do much harm rimming about. But the dag 's fallin' now, an' you hanna no 'ats on yer yeds. Come in, Luce. You mun hev bewitched the little waxwork, for I canna manage to raggle on wi' 'im nohow. He wants 'is muther, 'is muther, an' no 'un else 'ull do for he. You mun surely hev bewitched 'im wi' your winnin' ways, I doubt."

"Her bewitches all on us, Mrs. Cowland, Luce do," said Moll, with a sad smile.

"Oh, Moll!" cried Luce, prettily.

GEORGE MORLEY.

PIEUSEMENT

LA nuit d'hiver élève au ciel son pur calice.

Et je lève mon cœur aussi, mon cœur nocturne,
Seigneur, mon cœur ! vers ton pâle infini vide,
Et néanmoins, je sais que rien n'en pourra l'urne
Combler, et que rien n'est dont ce cœur meurt avide ;
Et je te sais mensonge et mes lèvres te prient
Et mes genoux ; je sais et tes grandes mains closes
Et tes grands yeux fermés aux désespoirs qui crient,
Et que c'est moi, qui, seul, me rêve dans les choses ;
Sois de pitié, Seigneur, pour ma toute démence,
J'ai besoin de pleurer mon mal vers ton silence ! . . .

La nuit d'hiver élève au ciel son pur calice !

EMILE VERHAEREN.

IN PIOUS MOOD

THE winter lifts its chalice of pure night to heaven.

And I uplift my heart, my night-worn heart, in turn,
O Lord, my heart ! to thy pale, infinite Inane,
And yet I know that nought the implenishable urn
May plenish, that nought is, whereof this heart dies fain ;
And I know thee a lie, and with my lips make prayer
And with my knees ; I know thy great, shut hands averse,
Thy great eyes closed, to all the clamours of despair ;
It is I, who dream myself into the universe ;
Have pity on my wandering wits' entire discord ;
Needs must I weep my woe towards thy silence, Lord !

The winter lifts its chalice of pure night to heaven.

OSMAN EDWARDS.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

III

SO far I have attempted to follow with little or no comment what seems to me the main current of Nietzsche's thought. It may be admitted that there is some question as to which is the main current. For my own part I have no hesitation in asserting that it is the current which expands to its fullest extent between 1876 and 1883 in what I term Nietzsche's second or middle period; up to then he had not gained complete individuality; afterwards came the period of uncontrolled aberrations. Thus I am inclined to pass lightly over the third period, during which the conception of "master-morality" attained its chief and most rigid emphasis, although I gather that to Nietzsche's disciples as to his foes this conception seems of primary importance. This idea of "master-morality" is in fact a solid fossilized chunk, easy to handle for friendly or unfriendly hands. The earlier and more living work—the work of the man who truly said that it is with thinkers as with snakes: those that cannot shed their skins die—is less obviously tangible. So the "master-morality" it is that your true Nietzschian is most likely to close his fist over. It would be unkind to say more, for Nietzsche himself has been careful to scatter through his works, on the subject of disciples and followers generally, very scathing remarks which must be sufficiently painful to the ordinary Nietzschian.

We are helped in understanding Nietzsche's philosophic significance if we understand his precise ideal. The psychological analysis of every great thinker's work seems to reveal some underlying fundamental image or thought —often enough simple and homely in character—which he has carried with him into the most abstract regions. Thus Fraser has found good reason to suppose that Hegel's main ideas were suggested by the then recent discovery of galvanism. In Nietzsche's case this key is to be found in the persistent image of an attitude. As a child, his sister tells us, he had been greatly impressed by a rope-dancer who had performed his feats over the market-place at Naumburg, and throughout his work, as soon as he had

attained to real self-expression, we may trace the image of the dancer. "I do not know," he somewhere says, "what the mind of a philosopher need desire more than to be a good dancer. For dancing is his ideal, his art also, indeed his only piety, his 'divine worship.'" In all Nietzsche's best work we are conscious of this ideal of the dancer, strong, supple, vigorous, yet harmonious and well-balanced. It is the dance of the athlete and the acrobat rather than the make-believe of the ball-room, and behind the easy equipoise of such dancing lie patient training and effort. The chief character of good dancing is its union of the maximum of energetic movement with the maximum of well-balanced grace. The whole muscular system is alive to restrain any excess, so that however wild and free the movement may seem it is always measured; excess would mean ignominious collapse. When in his later years Nietzsche began, as he said, to "philosophize with the hammer," and to lay about him savagely at every hollow "idol" within reach, he departed from his better ideal of dancing, and his thinking became intemperate, reckless, desperate.

Nietzsche had no system, probably because the idea that dominated his thought was an image, and not a formula, the usual obsession of philosophers, such as may be clapped on the universe at any desired point. He remarks in one place that a philosopher believes the worth of his philosophy to lie in the structure, but that what we ultimately value are the finely carven and separate stones with which he builded, and he was clearly anxious to supply the elaborated stones direct. In time he came to call himself a realist, using the term, in no philosophic sense, to indicate his reverence for the real and essential facts of life, the things that conduce to fine living. He desired to detach the "bad conscience" from the things that are merely wicked traditionally, and to attach it to the things that are anti-natural, anti-instinctive, anti-sensuous. He sought to inculcate veneration for the deep-lying sources of life, to take us down to the bed-rock of life, the rock whence we are hewn. He held that man, as a reality, with all his courage and cunning, is himself worthy of honour, but that man's ideals are absurd and morbid, the mere dregs in the drained cup of life; or, as he eventually said—and it is a saying which will doubtless seal his fate in the minds of many estimable persons—man's ideals are his only *partie honteuse*, of which we may avoid any close examination. Nietzsche's "realism" was thus simply a vigorous hatred of all dreaming that tends to depreciate the value of life, and a vivid sense that man himself is the *ens realissimum*.

To recognize the free and direct but disconnected nature of Nietzsche's many-sided vision of the world is to lessen the force of his own antagonisms as well as of the antagonisms he has excited. The master-morality of his later

days, on which friends and foes have alike insisted, is a case in point. This appears to have been hailed, or resented, as a death-blow struck at the modern democratic *régime*. To take a broad view of Nietzsche's philosophic development is to realize that both attitudes are alike out of place. On this matter, as on many others, Nietzsche moved in a line which led him to face an opposite direction in his decay from that which he faced in his immaturity. He began by regarding democracy as the standard of righteousness, and ended by asserting that the world only exists for the production of a few great men. It would be foolish to regard either of the termini as the last outpost of wisdom. But in the passage between these two points many excellent things are said by the way. Nietzsche was never enamoured of socialism or democracy for its own sake; he will not even admit, reasonably enough, that we have yet attained democracy; though the horses, indeed, are new, as yet "the roads are the same old roads, the wheels the same old wheels." But he points out that the value of democracy lies in its guarantee of individual freedom: Cyclopean walls are being built, with much toil and dust, but the walls will be a rampart against any invasion of barbarians or any new slavery, against the despotism of capital and the despotism of party. The workers may regard the walls as an end in themselves; we are free to value them for the fine flowers of culture which will grow in the gardens they inclose. To me, at least, this attitude of Nietzsche's maturity seems the ample defence of democracy.

Nietzsche was not, however, greatly interested in questions of government; he was far more deeply interested in questions of morals. In his treatment of morals—no doubt chiefly during the last period—there is a certain element of paradox. He grows altogether impatient of morals, calls himself an immoralist, fervently exhorts us to become wickeder. But if any young disciple came to the teacher asking, "What must I do to become wickeder?" it does not appear that Nietzsche bade him to steal, bear false witness, commit adultery, or do any other of the familiar and commonly-accepted wickednesses. Nietzsche preached wickedness with the same solemn exaltation as Carducci lauded Satan. What he desired was far indeed from any rehabilitation of easy vice; it was the justification of neglected and unsanctified virtues.

At the same time, and while Nietzsche's immoralist is just as austere a person as the mere moralists who have haunted the world for many thousand years, it is clear that Nietzsche wished strictly to limit the sphere of morals. He never fails to point out how large a region of life and art lies legitimately

outside the moral jurisdiction. In an age in which many moralists desire to force morals into every part of life and art—and even assume a certain air of virtue in so doing—the "immoralist" who lawfully vindicates any region for free cultivation is engaged in a proper and wholesome task.

No doubt, however, there will be some to question the value of such a task. Nietzsche the immoralist can scarcely be welcome in every camp, although he remains always a force to be reckoned with. The same may be said of Nietzsche the freethinker. He was, perhaps, the typical freethinker of the age that comes after Renan. Nietzsche had nothing of Renan's genial scepticism and smiling disillusionment; he was less tender to human weakness, for all his long Christian ancestry less Christian than the Breton seminarist remained to the last. He seems to have shaken himself altogether free of Christianity—so free, that except in his last period he even speaks of it without bitterness—and he remained untouched by any mediæval dreams, any nostalgia of the cloister such as now and then pursues even those of us who are farthest from any faith in Christian dogma. Heathen as he was, I do not think even Heine's visions of the gods in exile could have touched him; he never felt the charm of fading and faded things. It is remarkable. It is scarcely less remarkable that, far as he was from Christianity, he was equally far from what we usually call "paganism," the pasteboard paganism of easy self-indulgence and cheerful irresponsibility. It was not so that he understood Hellenism. In a famous essay, Matthew Arnold once remarked that the ideal Greek world was never sick or sorry. Nietzsche knew better. The greater part of Greek literature bears witness that the Hellenes were for ever wrestling with the problems of pain. And none who came after have more poignantly uttered the pangs of human affairs, or more sweetly the consolations of those pangs, than the great disciples of the Greeks who created the Roman world. The classic world of nymphs and fauns is an invention of the moderns. The real classic world, like the modern world, was a world of suffering. The difference lies in the method of facing that suffering. Nietzsche chose the classic method from no desire to sport with Amaryllis in the shade, but because he had known forms of torture for which the mild complacencies of modern faith seemed to offer no relief. If we must regard Nietzsche as a pagan, it is as the Pascal of paganism. The freethinker, it is true, was more cheerful and hopeful than the believer, but there is the same tragic sincerity, the same restless self-torment, the same sense of the abyss.

There still remains Nietzsche, the apostle of culture, the philosopher engaged in the criticism of life. From first to last, wherever you open his

books, you light on sayings that cut to the core of the questions that every modern thinking man must face. I take, almost at random, a few passages from a single book: of convictions he writes that "a man possesses opinions as he possesses fish, in so far as he owns a fishing-net; a man must go fishing and be lucky, then he has his own fish, his own opinions; I speak of living opinions, living fish. Some men are content to possess fossils in their cabinets —and convictions in their heads." Of the problem of the relation of science to culture he says well: "The best and wholesomest thing in science, as in mountains, is the air that blows there. It is because of that air that we spiritual weaklings avoid and defame science;" and he points out that the work of science—with its need for sincerity, infinite patience, complete self-abnegation—calls for men of nobler make than poetry needs. When we have learnt to trust science and to learn from it, then it will be possible so to tell natural history that "everyone who hears it is inspired to health and gladness as the heir and continuer of humanity." This is how he rebukes those foolish persons who grow impatient with critics: "Remember that critics are insects who only sting to live and not to hurt: they want our blood and not our pain." And he utters this wise saying, himself forgetting it in later years: "Growth in wisdom may be exactly measured by decrease in bitterness." Nietzsche desires to prove nothing, and is reckless of consistency. He looks at every question that comes before him with the same simple, intent, penetrative gaze, and whether the aspects that he reveals are new or old he seldom fails to bring us a fresh stimulus. Culture, as he understood it, consists for the modern man in the task of choosing the simple and indispensable things from the chaos of crude material which to-day overwhelms us. The man who will live at the level of the culture of his time is like the juggler who must keep a number of plates spinning in the air; his life must be a constant training in suppleness and skill so that he may be a good athlete. But he is also called on to exercise his skill in the selection and limitation of his task. Nietzsche is greatly occupied with the simplification of culture. Our suppleness and skill must be exercised alone on the things that are vital, essential, primitive; the rest may be thrown aside. He is for ever challenging the multifarious materials for culture, testing them with eye and hand; we cannot prove them too severely, he seems to say, nor cast aside too contemptuously the things that a real man has no need of for fine living. What must I do to be saved? what do I need for the best and fullest life?—that is the everlasting question that the teacher of life is called upon to answer. And we cannot be too grateful to Nietzsche for the stern penetration—the more acute for his ever

present sense of the limits of energy—with which he points us from amid the mass to the things which most surely belong to our eternal peace.

Nietzsche's style has often been praised. The style was certainly the man. There can be little doubt, moreover, that there is scarcely any other German style to compare with it, though such eminence means far less in a country where style has rarely been cultivated than it would mean in France or even England. Sallust awoke his sense for style, and may account for some characteristics of his style. He also enthusiastically admired Horace as the writer who had produced the maximum of energy with the minimum of material. A concentrated Roman style, significant and weighty at every point, *ære perennius*, was always his ideal. Certainly the philologist's aptitudes helped here to teach him the value and force of words, as jewels for the goldsmith to work with, and not as mere worn-out counters to slip through the fingers. One may call it a muscular style, a style wrought with the skilful strength of hand and arm. It scarcely appeals to the ear. It lacks the restful simplicity of the greatest masters, the plangent melody, the seemingly unconscious magic quivering along our finest-fibred nerves. Such effects we seem to hear now and again in Schopenhauer, but rarely or never from any other German. This style is titanic rather than divine, but the titanic virtues it certainly possesses in fullest measure: robust and well-tempered vigour, concentration, wonderful plastic force in moulding expression. It becomes overemphatic at last. When Nietzsche threw aside the dancer's ideal in order to "philosophize with the hammer," the result on his style was as disastrous as on his thought; both alike took on the violent and graceless character of the same implement. He speaks indeed of the virtue of hitting a nail on the head, but it is a less skilled form of virtue than good dancing.

Whether he was dancing or hammering, however, Nietzsche certainly converted the whole of himself into his work, as in his view every philosopher is bound to do, "for just that art of transformation *is* philosophy." That he was entirely successful in being a "real man" one may doubt. His excessive sensitiveness to the commonplace in life, and his deficiency in the sexual instinct—however highly he may have rated the importance of sex in life—largely cut him off from real fellowship with the men who are most "real" to us. He was less tolerant and less humane than his master Goethe; his incisive insight, and, in many respects, better intellectual equipment, are more than compensated by this lack of breadth. But every man works with the limitations of his qualities, just as we all struggle beneath the weight of the superincumbent atmosphere; our defects are even a part of our qualities, and it

would be foolish to quarrel with them. Nietzsche succeeded in being himself, and it was a finely rare success. Whether he was a "real man" matters less. With passionate sincerity he expressed his real self and his best self, abhorring, on the one hand, what with Verlaine he called "literature," and, on the other, all mere indigested material, the result of that mental dyspepsia of which he regarded Carlyle as the supreme warning. A man's real self, as he repeated so often, consists of the things which he has truly digested and assimilated; he must always "conquer" his opinions; it is only such conquests which he has the right to report to men as his own. His thoughts are born of his pain; he has imparted to them of his own blood, his own pleasure and torment. Nietzsche himself held that suffering and even disease are almost indispensable to the philosopher; great pain is the final emancipator of the spirit, those great slow pains that take their time, and burn us up like green wood. "I doubt whether such pain betters us," he remarks, "but I know that it deepens us." That is the stuff of Nietzsche's Hellenism, as expressed in the most light-hearted of his books. *Virescit volnere virtus.* It is that which makes him, when all is said, a great critic of life.

It is a consolation to many—I have seen it so stated in a respectable review—that Nietzsche went mad. No doubt also it was once a consolation to many that Socrates was poisoned, that Jesus was crucified, that Bruno was burnt. But hemlock and the cross and the stake proved sorry weapons against the might of ideas even in those days, and there is no reason to suppose that a doctor's certificate will be more effectual in our own. Of old time we killed our great men as soon as their visionary claims became inconvenient; now, in our mercy, we leave the tragedy of genius to unroll itself to the bitter close. The devils to whom the modern Faustus is committed have waxed cunning with the ages. Nietzsche has met, in its most relentless form, the fate of Pascal and Swift and Rousseau. That fact may carry what weight it will in any final estimate of his place as a moral teacher: it cannot touch his position as an immensely significant personality. It must still be affirmed that the nineteenth century has produced no more revolutionary and aboriginal force.

HAVELOCK ELLIS.

STELLA MALIGNA

A Woman speaks:

MY little slave!
Wouldst thou escape me? Only in the grave.

I will be poison to thee, honey-sweet,
And, my poison having tasted,
Thou shalt be delicately wasted,
Yet shalt thou live by that delicious death
Thou hast drunken from my breath,
Thou didst with my kisses eat.
I will be thy desire, and thou shalt flee me,
Thy enemy, and thou shalt seek:
My strength is to be weak,
And if through tears, not through thy tears, thou see me,
Beware, for of my kisses if thou tire,
Not of my tears,
Not of my tears shalt thou put off desire
Before the end of years.

What wouldst thou of me, little slave? my heart?
Nay, be content, here are mine arms around thee,
Be thou content that I have found thee,
And that I shall not suffer thee depart.
Ask nothing more of me.
Have I not given thee more than thou canst measure?
Take thou thy fill of pleasure.
Exult that thou art mine: think what it is
To be without my kiss;
Not to have known me is to know not love.
Think, to have known me not!
Heart may indeed from heart remove,
Body by body may not be forgot.

Thou hast been mine: ask nothing more of me.
My heart is not for thee.

Child, leave me then my heart;
I hold it in a folded peace apart,
I hold it for mine own.
There, in the quietness of dreams, it broods
Above untroubled moods,
No man hath been so near me as to have known.
The rest is thine: ah, take
The gift I have to give, my body, lent
For thy unsatisfied content,
For thy insatiable desire's compelling,
And let me for my pleasure make
For my own heart a lonely dwelling.
Thou wilt not? Thou wilt summon sorrow
From morrow unto endless morrow?
Thou wilt endure unto the uttermost?
Ah! little slave, my slave,
Thou shalt endure until desire be lost
In the achievement of the grave.
Thou shalt endure, and I, in dreams, behold,
Within my paradise of gold,
Thy heart's blood flowering for my peace;
And thy passion shall release
The secret light that in the lily glows,
The miracle of the secret rose.

ARTHUR SYMONS.

THE DYING OF FRANCIS DONNE

A STUDY

"Memento homo, quia pulvis es et in pulverem reverteris"

I

HE had lived so long in the meditation of death, visited it so often in others, studied it with such persistency, with a sentiment in which horror and fascination mingled; but it had always been, as it were, an objective, alien fact, remote from himself and his own life. So that it was in a sudden flash, quite too stupefying to admit in the first instance of terror, that knowledge of his mortality dawned on him. There was absurdity in the idea too.

"I, Francis Donne, thirty-five and some months old, am going to die," he said to himself; and fantastically he looked at his image in the glass, and sought, but quite vainly, to find some change in it which should account for this incongruity, just as, searching in his analytical habit into the recesses of his own mind, he could find no such alteration of his inner consciousness as would explain or justify his plain conviction. And quickly, with reason and casuistry, he sought to rebut that conviction.

The quickness of his mind—it had never seemed to him so nimble, so exquisite a mechanism of syllogism and deduction—was contraposed against his blind instinct of the would-be self-deceiver, in a conflict to which the latter brought something of desperation, the fierce, agonized desperation of a hunted animal at bay. But piece by piece the chain of evidence was strengthened. That subtile and agile mind of his, with its special knowledge, cut clean through the shrinking protests of instinct, removing them as surely and as remorselessly, he reflected in the image most natural to him, as the keen blade of his surgical knives had removed malignant ulcers.

"I, Francis Donne, am going to die," he repeated, and, presently, "*I am going to die soon;* in a few months, in six perhaps, certainly in a year."

Once more, curiously, but this time with a sense of neutrality, as he had often diagnosed a patient, he turned to the mirror. Was it his fancy, or, perhaps, only for the vague light that he seemed to discover a strange gray tone about his face?

But he had always been a man of a very sallow complexion.

There were a great many little lines, like pen-scratches, scarring the parchment-like skin beneath the keen eyes: doubtless, of late, these had multiplied, become more noticeable, even when his face was in repose.

But, of late, what with his growing practice, his lectures, his writing; all the unceasing labour, which his ambitions entailed, might well have aged him somewhat. That dull, immutable pain, which had first directed his attention from his studies, his investigations, his profession, to his corporal self, the actual Francis Donne, that pain which he would so gladly have called inexplicable, but could explain so precisely, had ceased for the moment. Nerves, fancies! How long it was since he had taken any rest! He had often intended to give himself holiday, but something had always intervened. But he would do so now, yes, almost immediately; a long, long holiday—he would grudge nothing—somewhere quite out of the way, somewhere, where there was fishing; in Wales, or perhaps in Brittany; that would surely set him right.

And even while he promised himself this necessary relaxation in the immediate future, as he started on his afternoon round, in the background of his mind there lurked the knowledge of its futility; rest, relaxation, all that, at this date, was, as it were, some tardy sacrifice, almost hypocritical, which he offered to powers who might not be propitiated.

Once in his neat brougham, the dull pain began again; but by an effort of will he put it away from him. In the brief interval from house to house—he had some dozen visits to make—he occupied himself with a medical paper, glanced at the notes of a lecture he was giving that evening at a certain Institute on the "Limitations of Medicine."

He was late, very late for dinner, and his man, Bromgrove, greeted him with a certain reproachfulness, in which he traced, or seemed to trace, a half-patronizing sense of pity. He reminded himself that on more than one occasion, of late, Bromgrove's manner had perplexed him. He was glad to rebuke the man irritably on some pretext, to dismiss him from the room, and he hurried, without appetite, through the cold or overdone food which was the reward of his tardiness.

His lecture over, he drove out to South Kensington, to attend a reception

at the house of a great man—great not only in the scientific world, but also in the world of letters. There was some of the excitement of success in his eyes as he made his way, with smiles and bows, in acknowledgment of many compliments, through the crowded rooms. For Francis Donne's lectures—those of them which were not entirely for the initiated—had grown into the importance of a social function. They had almost succeeded in making science fashionable, clothing its dry bones in a garment of so elegantly literary a pattern. But even in the ranks of the profession it was only the envious, the unsuccessful, who ventured to say that Donne had sacrificed doctrine to popularity, that his science was, in their contemptuous parlance, "mere literature."

Yes, he had been very successful, as the world counts success, and his consciousness of this fact, and the influence of the lights, the crowd, the voices, was like absinthe on his tired spirit. He had forgotten, or thought he had forgotten, the phantom of the last few days, the phantom which was surely waiting for him at home.

But he was reminded by a certain piece of news which late in the evening fluttered the now diminished assembly: the quite sudden death of an eminent surgeon, expected there that night, an acquaintance of his own, and more or less of each one of the little, intimate group which tarried to discuss it. With sympathy, with a certain awe, they spoke of him, Donne and the others; and both the awe and the sympathy were genuine.

But as he drove home, leaning back in his carriage, in a discouragement, in a lethargy, which was only partly due to physical reaction, he saw visibly underneath their regret—theirs and his own—the triumphant assertion of life, the egoism of instinct. They were sorry, but oh, they were glad! royally glad, that it was another, and not they themselves whom something mysterious had of a sudden snatched away from his busy career, his interests, perhaps from all intelligence; at least, from all the pleasant sensuousness of life, the joy of the visible world, into darkness. And he knew the sentiment, and honestly dared not blame it. How many times had not he, Francis Donne himself experienced it, that egoistic assertion of life in the presence of the dead—the poor, irremediable dead? . . . And now, he was only good to give it to others.

Latterly, he had been in the habit of subduing sleeplessness with injections of morphia, indeed in infinitesimal quantities. But to-night, although he was more than usually restless and awake, by a strong effort of reasonableness he resisted his impulse to take out the little syringe. The pain was at

him again with the same dull and stupid insistence; in its monotony, losing some of the nature of pain and becoming a mere nervous irritation. But he was aware that it would not continue like that. Daily, almost hourly, it would gather strength and cruelty; the moments of respite from it would become rarer, would cease. From a dull pain it would become an acute pain, and then a torture, and then an agony, and then a madness. And in those last days, what peace might be his would be the peace of morphia, so that it was essential that, for the moment, he should not abuse the drug.

And as he knew that sleep was far away from him, he propped himself up with two pillows, and by the light of a strong reading-lamp settled himself to read. He had selected the work of a distinguished German *savant* upon the cardial functions, and a short treatise of his own, which was covered with recent annotations, in his crabbed hand-writing, upon "Aneurism of the Heart." He read avidly, and against his own deductions, once more his instinct raised a vain protest. At last he threw the volumes aside, and lay with his eyes shut, without, however, extinguishing the light. A terrible sense of helplessness overwhelmed him; he was seized with an immense and heart-breaking pity for poor humanity as personified in himself; and, for the first time since he had ceased to be a child, he shed puerile tears.

II

The faces of his acquaintance, the faces of the students at his lectures, the faces of Francis Donne's colleagues at the hospital, were altered; were, at least, sensibly altered to his morbid self-consciousness. In every one whom he encountered, he detected, or fancied that he detected, an attitude of evasion, a hypocritical air of ignoring a fact that was obvious and unpleasant. Was it so obvious, then, the hidden horror which he carried incessantly about with him? Was his secret, which he would still guard so jealously, become a byword and an anecdote in his little world? And a great rage consumed him against the inexorable and inscrutable forces which had made him to destroy him; against himself, because of his proper impotence; and, above all, against the living, the millions who would remain when he was no longer, the living, of whom many would regret him (some of them his personality, and more, his skill), because he could see under all the unconscious hypocrisy of their sorrow, the exultant self-satisfaction of their survival.

And with his burning sense of helplessness, of a certain bitter injustice

in things, a sense of shame mingled; all the merely physical dishonour of death shaping itself to his sick and morbid fancy into a violent symbol of what was, as it were, an actually *moral* or intellectual dishonour. Was not death, too, inevitable and natural an operation as it was, essentially a process to undergo apart and hide jealously, as much as other natural and ignoble processes of the body?

And the animal, who steals away to an uttermost place in the forest, who gives up his breath in a solitude and hides his dying like a shameful thing,—might he not offer an example that it would be well for the dignity of poor humanity to follow?

Since Death is coming to me, said Francis Donne to himself, let me meet it, a stranger in a strange land, with only strange faces round me and the kind indifference of strangers, instead of the intolerable pity of friends.

III

On the bleak and wave-tormented coast of Finistère, somewhere between Quiberon and Fouesnant, he reminded himself of a little fishing-village: a few scattered houses (one of them being an *auberge* at which ten years ago he had spent a night,) collected round a poor little gray church. Thither Francis Donne went, without leave-takings or explanation, almost secretly, giving but the vaguest indications of the length or direction of his absence. And there for many days he dwelt, in the cottage which he had hired, with one old Breton woman for his sole attendant, in a state of mind which, after all the years of energy, of ambitious labour, was almost peace.

Bleak and gray it had been, when he had visited it of old, in the late autumn; but now the character, the whole colour of the country was changed. It was brilliant with the promise of summer, and the blue Atlantic, which in winter churned with its long crested waves so boisterously below the little white light-house, which warned mariners (alas! so vainly), against the shark-like cruelty of the rocks, now danced and glittered in the sunshine, rippled with feline caresses round the hulls of the fishing-boats whose brown sails floated so idly in the faint air.

Above the village, on a grassy slope, whose green was almost lurid, Francis Donne lay, for many silent hours, looking out at the placid sea, which could yet be so ferocious, at the low violet line of the Island of Groix, which alone interrupted the monotony of sky and ocean.

He had brought many books with him but he read in them rarely; and

when physical pain gave him a respite for thought, he thought almost of nothing. His thought was for a long time a lethargy and a blank.

Now and again he spoke with some of the inhabitants. They were a poor and hardy, but a kindly race: fishers and the wives of fishers, whose children would grow up and become fishermen and the wives of fishermen in their turn. Most of them had wrestled with death; it was always so near to them that hardly one of them feared it; they were fatalists, with the grim and resigned fatalism of the poor, of the poor who live with the treachery of the sea.

Francis Donne visited the little cemetery, and counted the innumerable crosses which testified to the havoc which the sea had wrought. Some of the graves were nameless; holding the bodies of strange seamen which the waves had tossed ashore.

"And in a little time I shall lie here," he said to himself; "and here as well as elsewhere," he added with a shrug, assuming, and, for once, almost sincerely, the stoicism of his surroundings, "and as lief to-day as to-morrow."

On the whole, the days were placid; there were even moments when, as though he had actually drunk in renewed vigour from that salt sea air, the creative force of the sun, he was tempted to doubt his grievous knowledge, to make fresh plans of life. But these were fleeting moments, and the reaction from them was terrible. Each day his hold on life was visibly more slender, and the people of the village saw, and with a rough sympathy, which did not offend him, allowed him to perceive that they saw, the rapid growth and the inevitableness of his end.

IV

But if the days were not without their pleasantness, the nights were always horrible—a torture of the body and an agony of the spirit. Sleep was far away, and the brain, which had been lulled till the evening, would awake, would grow electric with life and take strange and abominable flights into the darkness of the pit, into the black night of the unknowable and the unknown.

And interminably, during those nights which seemed eternity, Francis Donne questioned and examined into the nature of that Thing, which stood, a hooded figure beside his bed, with a menacing hand raised to beckon him so peremptorily from all that lay within his consciousness.

He had been all his life absorbed in science; he had dissected, how many bodies? and in what anatomy had he ever found a soul? Yet if his avocations,

his absorbing interest in physical phenomena had made him somewhat a materialist, it had been almost without his consciousness. The sensible, visible world of matter had loomed so large to him, that merely to know that had seemed to him sufficient. All that might conceivably lie outside it, he had, without negation, been content to regard as outside his province.

And now, in his weakness, in the imminence of approaching dissolution, his purely physical knowledge seemed but a vain possession, and he turned with a passionate interest to what had been said and believed from time immemorial by those who had concentrated their intelligence on that strange essence, which might after all be the essence of one's personality, which might be that sublimated consciousness—the Soul—actually surviving the infamy of the grave?

Animula, vagula, blandula!
Hospes comesque corporis,
Quæ nunc abibis in loca?
Pallidula, rigida, nudula.

Ah, the question! It was an harmony, perhaps (as, who had maintained? whom the Platonic Socrates in the "Phaedo" had not too successfully refuted), an harmony of life, which was dissolved when life was over? Or, perhaps, as how many metaphysicians had held both before and after a sudden great hope, perhaps too generous to be true, had changed and illuminated, to countless millions, the inexorable figure of Death—a principle, indeed, immortal, which came and went, passing through many corporal conditions until it was ultimately resolved into the great mind, pervading all things? Perhaps? . . . But what scanty consolation, in all such theories, to the poor body, racked with pain and craving peace, to the tortured spirit of self-consciousness so achingly anxious not to be lost.

And he turned from these speculations to what was, after all, a possibility like the others; the faith of the simple, of these fishers with whom he lived, which was also the faith of his own childhood, which, indeed, he had never repudiated, whose practices he had simply discarded, as one discards puerile garments when one comes to man's estate. And he remembered, with the vividness with which, in moments of great anguish, one remembers things long ago familiar, forgotten though they may have been for years, the triumphant declarations of the Church:

"*Omnes quidem resurgemus, sed non omnes immutabimur. In momento, in ictu oculi, in novissima tuba: canet enim tuba: et mortui resurgent incorrupti, et nos immutabimur. Oportet enim corruptibile hoc induere immortalitatem. Cum*

autem mortale hoc induerit immortalitatem tunc fiet sermo qui scriptus est: Absorpta est mors in victoria. Ubi est, mors, victoria tua? Ubi est, mors, stimulus tuus?"

Ah, for the certitude of that! of that victorious confutation of the apparent destruction of sense and spirit in a common ruin. . . . But it was a possibility like the rest; and had it not more need than the rest to be more than a possibility, if it would be a consolation, in that it promised more? And he gave it up, turning his face to the wall, lay very still, imagining himself already stark and cold, his eyes closed, his jaw closely tied (lest the ignoble changes which had come to him should be too ignoble), while he waited until the narrow boards, within which he should lie, had been nailed together, and the bearers were ready to convey him into the corruption which was to be his part.

And as the window-pane grew light with morning, he sank into a drugged, unrestful sleep, from which he would awake some hours later with eyes more sunken and more haggard cheeks. And that was the pattern of many nights.

V

One day he seemed to wake from a night longer and more troubled than usual, a night which had, perhaps, been many nights and days, perhaps even weeks; a night of an ever-increasing agony, in which he was only dimly conscious at rare intervals of what was happening, or of the figures coming and going around his bed: the doctor from a neighbouring town, who had stayed by him unceasingly, easing his paroxysms with the little merciful syringe; the soft, practised hands of a sister of charity about his pillow; even the face of Bromgrove, for whom doubtless he had sent, when he had foreseen the utter helplessness which was at hand.

He opened his eyes, and seemed to discern a few blurred figures against the darkness of the closed shutters through which one broad ray filtered in; but he could not distinguish their faces, and he closed his eyes once more. An immense and ineffable tiredness had come over him, but the pain—oh, miracle! had ceased. . . . And it suddenly flashed over him that this—*this* was Death; this was the thing against which he had cried and revolted; the horror from which he would have escaped; this utter luxury of physical exhaustion, this calm, this release.

The corporal capacity of smiling had passed from him, but he would fain have smiled.

And for a few minutes of singular mental lucidity, all his life flahsed before him in a new relief; his childhood, his adolescence, the people whom he had known; his mother, who had died when he was a boy, of a malady from which, perhaps, a few years later, his skill had saved her; the friend of his youth who had shot himself for so little reason; the girl whom he had loved, but who had not loved him. . . . All that was distorted in life was adjusted and justified in the light of his sudden knowledge. *Beati mortui* . . . and then the great tiredness swept over him once more, and a fainter consciousness, in which he could yet just dimly hear, as in a dream, the sound of Latin prayers, and feel the application of the oils upon all the issues and approaches of his wearied sense; then utter unconsciousness, while pulse and heart gradually grew fainter until both ceased. And that was all.

ERNEST DOWSON.

THREE SONNETS

HAWKER OF MORWENSTOW

TRONG shepherd of thy sheep, pasturers of the sea:
Far on the Western marge, thy passionate Cornish land!
Ah, that from out thy Paradise thou couldst thine hand
Reach forth to mine, and I might tell my love to thee!
For one the faith, and one the joy, of thee and me,
Catholic faith and Celtic joy: I understand
Somewhat, I too, the messengers from Sion strand;
The voices and the visions of the Mystery.

Ah, not the Chaunt alone was thine: thine too the Quest!
And at the last the Sangraal of the Paschal Christ
Flashed down Its fair red Glory to those dying eyes:
They closed in death, and opened on the Victim's Breast.
Now, while they look for ever on the Sacrificed,
Remember, how thine ancient race in twilight lies!

MOTHER ANN: FOUNDRESS OF THE SHAKERS

HITE were the ardours of thy soul, O wan Ann Lee!
Thou spirit of fine fire, for every storm to shake!
They shook indeed the quivering flame; yet could not make
Its passionate light expire, but only make it flee:
Over the vast, the murmuring, the embittered sea,
Driven, it gleamed: no agonies availed to break
That burning heart, so hot for heavenly passion's sake;
The heart, that beat, and burned, and agonized, in thee!

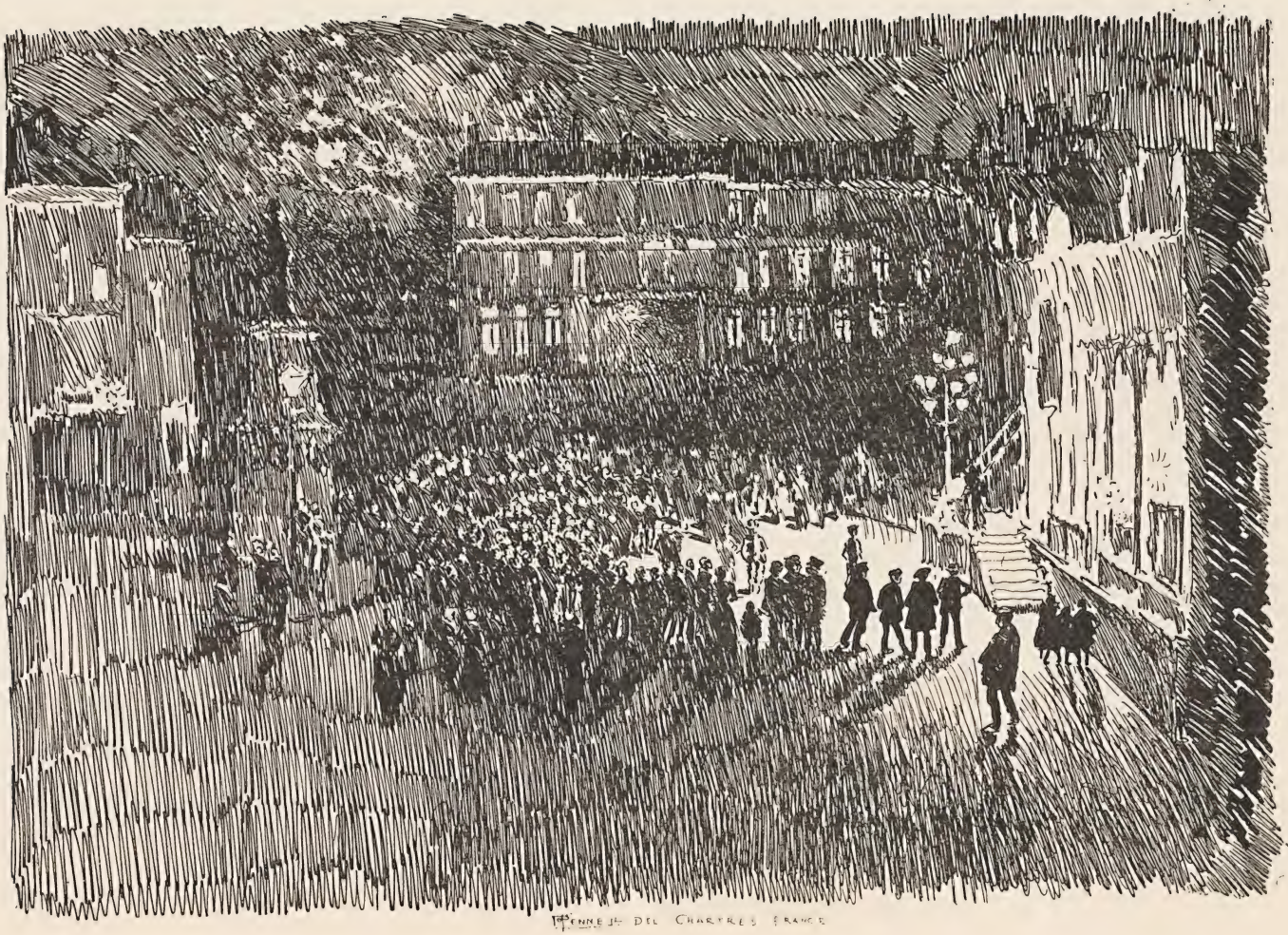
Thou knewest not: yet thine was altar flame astray:
Poor exiled, wandering star, that might'st have stayed and stood
Hard by the Holy Host, close to the Holy Rood,
Illumining the great one Truth, one Life, one Way!
O piteous pilgrim pure amid night's sisterhood:
For thee doth Mother Mary, Star of Morning, pray

MÜNSTER: A.D. 1534

E are the golden men, who shall the people save:
For only ours are visions, perfect and divine;
And we alone are drunken with the last best wine;
And very Truth our souls hath flooded, wave on wave.
Come, wretched death's inheritors, who dread the grave!
Come! for upon our brows is set the starry sign
Of prophet, priest, and king: star of the Lion's line!
Leave Abana, leave Pharpar, and in Jordan lave!

It thundered, and we heard: it lightened, and we saw:
Our hands have torn in twain the Tables of the Law:
Sons of the Spirit, we know nothing more of sin.
Come! from the Tree of Eden take the mystic fruit:
Come! pluck up God's own knowledge by the abysmal root:
Come! you, who would the Reign of Paradise begin.

LIONEL JOHNSON.


PENNE 14 DEL CHARTRES FRANCE

THE GINGERBREAD FAIR AT VINCENNES

A COLOUR-STUDY

I

THE tram rolls heavily through the sunshine, on the way to Vincennes. The sun beats on one's head like the glow of a furnace; we are in the second week of May, and the hour is between one and two in the afternoon. From the Place Voltaire, all along the dingy boulevard, there are signs of the fair: first, little stalls, with the refuse of ironmonger and pastry-cook, then little booths, then a few roundabouts, the wooden horses standing motionless. At the Place de la Nation we have reached the fair itself. Already the roundabouts swarm in gorgeous inactivity; shooting-galleries with lofty names—Tir Metropolitain, Tir de Lutèce—lead on to the establishments of *cochonnerie*, the gingerbread pigs, which have given its name to the *Foire au pain d'épice*. From between the two pillars, each with its airy statue, we can look right on, through lanes of stalls and alleys of dusty trees, to the railway bridge which crosses the other end of the Cours de Vincennes, just before it subsides into the desolate boulevard Soult and the impoverished grass of the ramparts. Hardly anyone passes: the fair, which is up late, sleeps till three. I saunter slowly along, watching the drowsy attitudes of the women behind their stalls, the men who lounge beside their booths. Only the photographer is in activity, and as you pause a moment to note his collection of grimacing and lachrymose likenesses (probably very like), a framed horror is thrust into your hand, and a voice insinuates: "Six pour un sou, Monsieur!"

To stroll through the fair just now is to have a sort of "Private View." The hour of disguises has not yet begun. The heavy girl who, in an hour's time, will pose in rosy tights and cerulean tunic on those trestles yonder in front of the theatre, sits on the ladder-staircase of her "jivin wardo," her "living

waggon," as the gipsies call it, diligently mending, with the help of scissors and thread, a piece of canvas which is soon to be a castle or a lake. A lion-tamer, in his shirt-sleeves is chatting with the proprietress of a collection of waxworks. A fairy queen is washing last week's tights in a great tub. And booths and theatres seem to lounge in the same *déshabille*. With their vacant platforms, their closed doors, their too visible masterpieces of coloured canvas, they stand, ugly and dusty, every crack and patch exposed by the pitiless downpour of the sunlight. Here is the show of Pezon, the old lion-tamer, who is now assisted by his son; opposite, his rival and constant neighbour, Bidel. The Grand Théâtre Cocherie announces its "grande féerie" in three acts and twenty tableaux. A "concert international" succeeds a very dismal-looking "Temple de la Gaieté." Here is the Théâtre Macketti; here the "Grande Musée Vivant"; here a "Galerie artistique" at one sou. "Laurent, inimitable dompteur (pour la première fois à Paris)," has for companion "Juliano et ses fauves: Fosse aux Lions." There is a very large picture of a Soudanese giant—"il est ici, le géant Soudanais: 2^{m} 20 de hauteur"—outside a very small tent; the giant, very black in the face, and very red as to his habiliments, holds a little black infant in the palm of his hand, and by his side, carefully avoiding (by a delicacy of the painter) a too direct inspection, stands a gendarme, who extends five fingers in a gesture of astonishment, somewhat out of keeping with the perfect placidity of his face. "Théâtres des Illusions" flourish side by side with "Musées artistiques," in which the latest explosive Anarchist, or "le double crime du boulevard du Temple," is the "great attraction" of the moment. Highly coloured and freely designed pictures of nymphs and naiads are accompanied by such seductive and ingenuous recommendations as this, which I copy textually: I cannot reproduce the emphasis of the lettering: "Etoiles Animées. Filles de l'Air. Nouvelle attraction par le professeur Julius. Pourquoi Mlle. Isaure est-elle appelée Déesse des Eaux? C'est par sa Grâce et son pouvoir mystérieux de paraître au milieu des Eaux limpides, devant tous les spectateurs qui deviendront ses Admirateurs. En Plein Théâtre la belle Isaure devient Syrène et Nayade! charme par ses jeux sveltes et souples, apparaît en Plein Mer, et présentée par le professeur Julius à chaque représentation. Plusieurs pâles imitateurs essayent de copier la belle Isaure, mais le vrai Public, amateur du Vrai et du Beau, dira que la Copie ne vaut pas l'original." And there is a "Jardin mystérieux" which represents an improbable harem, with an undesirable accompaniment of performing reptiles. Before this tent I pause, but not for the sake of its announcements. In the doorway sits a beautiful young girl of about sixteen, a Jewess, with a face that

Leonardo might have painted. A red frock reaches to her knees, her thin legs, in white tights, are crossed nonchalantly; in her black hair there is the sparkle of false diamonds, ranged in a tiara above the gracious contour of her forehead; and she sits there, motionless, looking straight before her with eyes that see nothing, absorbed in some vague reverie, the Monna Lisa of the Gingerbread Fair.

II

It is half-past three, and the Cours de Vincennes is a carnival of colours, sounds, and movements. Looking from the Place de la Nation, one sees a long thin line of customers along the stalls of bonbons and gingerbread, and the boulevard has the air of a black-edged sheet of paper, until the eye reaches the point where the shows begin. Then the crowd is seen in black patches, sometimes large, extending half across the road, sometimes small; every now and then, one of the black patches thins rapidly, as the people mount the platform, or as there is a simultaneous movement from one point of attraction to another. At one's back the roundabouts are squealing the "répertoire Paulus," in front there is a continuous, deafening rumble of drums, with an inextricable jangle and jumble of brass bands, each playing a different tune, all at once, and all close together. Shrill or hoarse voices are heard for a moment, to be drowned the next by the intolerable drums and cornets. As one moves slowly down the long avenue, distracted by the cries, the sounds, coming from both sides at once, it is quite another aspect that is presented by those dingy platforms, those gaping canvases, of but an hour ago. Every platform is alive with human frippery. A clown in reds and yellows, with a floured and rouged face, bangs a big drum, an orchestra (sometimes of one, sometimes of fifteen) "blows through brass" with the full power of its lungs; fulgently and scantily attired ladies throng the foreground, a man in plain clothes squanders the remains of a voice in howling the attractions of the interior, and in the background, at a little table, an opulent lady sits at the receipt of custom, with the business-like solemnity of the *dame du comptoir* of a superior restaurant. Occasionally there is a *pas seul*, more often an indifferent waltz, at times an impromptu comedy. Outside Bidel's establishment a tired and gentle dromedary rubs its nose against the pole to which it is tied; elsewhere a monkey swings on a trapeze; a man with a snake about his shoulders addresses the crowd, and my Monna Lisa, too, has twined a snake around her, and stands holding the little malevolent head in her fingers, like an exquisite and harmless Medusa.

Under the keen sunlight every tint stands out sharply, and to pass between those two long lines of gesticulating figures is to plunge into an orgy of clashing colours. All the women wear the coarsest of worsted tights, meant, for the most part, to be flesh-colour, but it varies, through all the shades, from the palest of pink to the brightest of red. Often the tights are patched, sometimes they are not even patched. The tunic may be mauve, or orange, or purple, or blue; it is generally open in front, showing a close-fitting jersey of the same colour as the tights. The arms are bare, the faces, as a rule, made up with discretion and restraint. There is one woman (she must once have been very beautiful) who appears in ballet skirts; there is a man in blue-grey cloak and hood, warriors in plumes and cuirass; but for the most part it is the damsels in flesh-coloured tights and jerseys who parade on the platforms outside the theatres. When they break into a waltz it is always the most dissonant of mauves and pinks and purples that choose one another as partners. As the girls move carelessly and clumsily round in the dance, they continue the absorbing conversations in which they are mostly engaged. Rarely does anyone show the slightest interest in the crowd whose eyes are all fixed—so thirstingly!—upon them. They stand or move as they are told, mechanically, indifferently, and that is all. Often, but not always, well-formed, they have occasionally pretty faces as well. There is a brilliant little creature, one of the crowd of warriors outside the Théâtre Cocherie, who has quite an individual type of charm and intelligence. She has a boyish face, little black curls on her forehead, a proud, sensitive mouth, and black eyes full of wit and defiance. As Miss Angelina, "artiste gymnasiarque, équilibriste et danseuse," goes through a very ordinary selection of steps ("rocks," "scissors," and the like, as they are called in the profession), Julienne's eyes devour every movement: she is learning how to do it, and will practise it herself, without telling anyone, until she can surprise them some day by taking Miss Angelina's place.

III

But it is at night, towards nine o'clock, that the fair is at its best. The painted faces, the crude colours, assume their right aspect, become harmonious, under the artificial light. The dancing pinks and reds whirl on the platforms, flash into the gas-light, disappear for an instant into a solid shadow, against the light, emerge vividly. The moving black masses surge to and fro before the booths; from the side one sees lines of rigid figures, faces that the light shows in eager profile. Outside the Théâtre Cocherie there is a shifting light

which turns a dazzling glitter, moment by moment, across the road; it plunges like a sword into one of the trees opposite, casts a glow as of white fire over the transfigured green of leaves and branches, and then falls off, baffled by the impenetrable leafage. As the light drops suddenly on the crowd, an instant before only dimly visible, it throws into fierce relief the intent eyes, the gaping mouths, the unshaven cheeks, darting into the hollows of broken teeth, pointing cruelly at every scar and wrinkle. As it swings round in the return, it dazzles the eyes of one tall girl at the end of the platform, among the warriors: she turns away her head, or grimaces. In the middle of the platform there is a violent episode of horse-play: a man in plain clothes belabours two clowns with a sounding lath, and is in turn belaboured; then the three rush together, pell-mell, roll over one another, bump down the steps to the ground, return, recommence, with the vigour and gusto of schoolboys in a scrimmage. Further on a white clown tumbles on a stage, girls in pink and black and white move vaguely before a dark red curtain, brilliant red breeches sparkle, a girl *en garçon*, standing at one side in a graceful pose which reveals her fine outlines, shows a motionless silhouette, cut out sharply against the light; the bell rings, the drum beats, a large blonde-wigged woman, dressed in Louis XIV., cries her wares and holds up placards, white linen with irregular black lettering. Outside a boxing booth a melancholy lean man blows inaudibly into a horn; his cheeks puff, his fingers move, but not a sound can be heard above the thunder of the band of Laurent le Dompteur. Before the *ombres chinoises* a lamp hanging to a tree sheds its light on a dark red background, on the gendarme who moves across the platform, on the pink and green hat of Madame, and her plump hand supporting her chin, on Monsieur's irreproachable silk hat and white whiskers. Near by is a theatre where they are giving the "Cloches de Corneville," and the platform is thronged with lounging girls in tights. They turn their backs unconcernedly to the crowd, and the light falls on pointed shoulder-blades, one distinguishes the higher vertebræ of the spine. A man dressed in a burlesque female costume kicks a print dress extravagantly into the air, flutters a ridiculous fan, with mincing airs, with turns and somersaults. People begin to enter, and the platform clears; a line of figures marches along the narrow footway running the length of the building, to a curtained entrance at the end. The crowd in front melts away, straggles across the road to another show, straggling back again as the drum begins to beat and the line of figures marches back to the stage.

In front, at the outskirts of the crowd, two youngsters in blouses have begun to dance, kicking their legs in the air, to the strains of a mazurka; and

now two women circle. A blind man, in the space between two booths, sits holding a candle in his hand, a pitiful object; the light falls on his straw hat, the white placard on his breast, his face is in shadow. As I pause before a booth where a fat woman in tights flourishes a pair of boxing gloves, I find myself by the side of my Monna Lisa of the enchanted garden. Her show is over, and she is watching the others. She wears a simple black dress and a dark blue apron; her hair is neatly tied back with a ribbon. She is quite ready to be amused, and it is not only I, but the little professional lady, who laughs at the farce which begins on a neighbouring stage, where a patch-work clown comes out arm in arm with a nightmare of a pelican, the brown legs very human, the white body and monstrous orange bill very fearsome and fantastic. A pale Pierrot languishes against a tree: I see him as I turn to go, and, looking back, I can still distinguish the melancholy figure above the waltz of the red and pink and purple under the lights, the ceaseless turning of those human dolls, with their fixed smile, their painted colours.

IV

It is half-past eleven, and the fair is over for the night. One by one the lights are extinguished; faint glimmers appear in the little square windows of dressing-rooms and sleeping-rooms; silhouettes cross and re-cross the drawn blinds, with lifted arms and huddled draperies. The gods of *tableaux vivants*, negligently modern in attire, stroll off across the road to find a comrade, rolling a cigarette between their fingers. Monna Lisa passes rapidly, with her brother, carrying a marketing basket. And it is a steady movement townwards; the very stragglers prepare to go, stopping, from time to time, to buy a great gingerbread pig with Jean or Suzanne scrawled in great white letters across it. Outside one booth, not yet closed, I am arrested by the desolation of a little frail creature, with a thin, suffering, painted face, his pink legs crossed, who sits motionless by the side of the great drum, looking down wearily at the cymbals that he still holds in his hands. In the open spaces roundabouts turn, turn, a circle of moving lights, encircled by a thin line of black shadows. The sky darkens, a little wind is rising; the night, after this day of heat, will be stormy. And still, to the waltz measure of the roundabouts, turning, turning frantically, the last lingerers defy the midnight, a dance of shadows.

ARTHUR SYMONS.

THE SONG OF THE WOMEN

A WEALDEN TRIO

1st Voice:

WHEN ye've got a child 'at 's whist for want of food,
And a grate as grey 's y'r 'air for want of wood,
And y'r man and you ain't nowise not much good;

Together:

Oh—
It 's hard work a-Christmassing,
Carolling,
Singin' songs about the " Babe what 's born."

2nd Voice:

When ye've 'eered the bailiff's 'and upon the latch,
And ye've feeled the rain a-trickling through the thatch
An' y'r man can't git no stones to break ner yit no sheep to watch—

Together:

Oh—
We got to come a-Christmassing,
Carolling,
Singin' of the "Shepherds on that morn."

3rd Voice, more cheerfully:

'E was a man 's poor as us, very near,
An' 'E 'ad 'is trials and danger,
An' I think 'E 'll think of us when 'E sees us singing 'ere;
For 'is mother was poor like us, poor dear,
An' she bore him in a manger.

Together:

Oh—
It 's warm in the heavens but it 's cold upon the earth;
An' we ain't no food at table nor no fire upon the hearth;
And it 's bitter hard a-Christmassing;
Carolling;
Singin' songs about our Saviour's birth;
Singin' songs about the Babe what's born;
Singin' of the shepherds on that morn.

FORD MADOX HUEFFER.

DOCTOR AND PATIENT

THE doctor sat at the bedside of his old friend, now his patient, who was dying, inevitably dying. Accustomed as he was to the presence of death, this passing away of a man to whom he was bound by the tie of a thousand common associations added a freshness to its aspect, to its profound mysteries, its terrors. He was inexpressibly sorry. Still, at this critical moment, with the pale image of the invalid before him, while breathing the atmosphere of the sick room, his thoughts were remote from the bedside; he was preoccupied by another grief.

The patient had realized his fate, he knew that he was on the point of dying, that the thing was inevitable, and he was reconciled. He waited on the threshold of death, calmly, without fear; he seemed to feel the gradual absorption of his soul into the unknown, to be conscious of a gradual effacement, and the sensation filled him only with a benign curiosity.

With the quickened sensitiveness of an invalid the sick man understood that his companion at his bedside was troubled, his good friend who had nursed him with so eager a devotion; and at first he thought, and the thought occasioned him a tranquil, warming sense of gratitude, that it was the contemplation of the slender link which held him to life that was the cause. But a little later, with still quicker intuition, he divined that the trouble had its origin in another source, that he himself was not concerned in it. The comprehension of this did not embitter his mind nor diminish its tranquillity; he was, indeed, this dying man, sorry for the man of life, for the man of robust health, sorry that he should be in some unknown pain.

"What is the matter with you, Philip? Something has not gone well with you; something is bothering you," he said at last.

The doctor took his hand and caressed it quietly. "Are you not ill my friend?" he said.

"Yes, yes; but it is not that. There is something else. Tell me. You will not withdraw your confidence from me now? Come: let me know. You

have done your best for me; perhaps—who knows!—I may be of some use to you."

"Will it be more effectual?" the doctor said rather bitterly.

"Nonsense! You would have saved me, if you could. It was taken out of your hands. With you it is different. Physical ills, believe me, are alone incurable; and are not you a miracle of health?"

Still the doctor hesitated.

"You would do something for me?" the patient went on.

"I would give my life for yours, you know."

"Then give me your life, your heart, your full confidence. Give yourself to me now, old friend, as we have always given ourselves to each other, unreservedly, without restraint, without evasion. For taking us together, you and I have been, as men go, tolerably frank towards each other, have we not? We have not concealed from each other our little introspective perplexities, our trivial vanities, our scarcely trivial meannesses. Ours has been a very true comradeship. Let me feel, while all things are slipping away from me, that it still exists; that you have not already come to regard me as a thing apart; come, let me carry the memory of it away—away with me."

"Very well, then, I shall tell you . . . . Frank! Yes, we have been rarely open with each other! Yet, there are many things, the joy and misery of which at once is, that they are unrevealed and unrevealable."

"Am I at last, at this stage, only becoming to know you?"

The doctor pressed his hand gently. "And it is more difficult than ever to tell you now," he said. He got up and walked noiselessly about the room. "You know, at least, that I have not been a loose-living man," he said hesitatingly, as if he were formulating a justification, "that I have certain ideas, that my vagaries have never at any time been excessive, and that even they have ceased these fourteen years or so, since my marriage. Before then, before my marriage—well, was I not wild, inconsiderate of others, indiscreet! But one, after all, has a tender memory for these precious escapades of youth, for these gay irresponsible love episodes, of sometimes so melancholy an ending . . . In one instance, I am not sure that I was entirely to blame. I loved the creature ardently enough at the time." Something which he observed in the face of the ill man made him hesitate. "But how can I talk to you of these matters, of love, when——"

"When death is knocking at my door. Pray continue. Even I, who am too weak to lift my hand, can feel the strength of love, realize its imperishable power."

"Even you who have never loved."

Even I who have loved in vain, thought the patient. "Go on," he said aloud.

"I loved her youthfully, tempestuously, unthinkingly; and when the reaction came it was too late."

"You had married?"

"No: I am speaking of before Catherine's time, or, at least, before the time of my marriage with her."

"Ah!"

"I began to mistrust her."

"You are not speaking of Catherine?"

"No. I doubted her fidelity, her love for me. It seemed somehow that I had been entrapped by her into a difficult position. The idea of marriage, at any rate, was particularly distasteful to me at the time; and I would not marry her. She tried very hard before the child was born; I was sorry for her, but immovable. I could not, you see, come quite to believe in her; her protestations failed to convince me. There may have been some sort of temperamental antagonism at the bottom of it all, which was responsible for the vague, undefined suspicions which restrained me."

"She allowed me to contribute to the support of the child—a boy, although with a wilful independence, or, perhaps, to cause me pain, she would take nothing from me for herself. Well, some time after this incident I married Catherine,—a discreet, respectable affair which settled me in my practice. Catherine and I have rubbed along pretty happily, but we have had no children. Was there a sort of judgment in that, I wonder? Perhaps. I have at times half thought so."

"However that may be, I came in time to be instinctively drawn towards her child—and mine. She consented to my seeing him, a fine brave little fellow, with my own eyes looking at me from his head. To see him, this part of me, to be with him, was the greatest happiness I had known: to watch his gradual development, to listen to his ingenuous prattle, to be vanquished by him in a bout of repartee, to take him, all unsuspected, to the Zoo or to a pantomime. You can't realize it! how the impulses and objects of his little life became entwined in mine, inseparably, always! Little! He has grown; his ideas already bear the impress of manhood. I have had him as decently educated as possible; she would not let him be out of her sight for long. And I hoped eventually to be able to send him to Oxford and give him the chance of a career."

"You hoped? . . . Has he died then, too?"

"He is alive and well, I trust! only she has never forgiven me. Perhaps I was mistaken, unreasonable; perhaps I should have married her. It might have been happier. If one could only foresee!"

"Who was she? Do I know?"

"Possibly. I think so, if you can now remember."

"Who?"

"Beatrice"—

"West!"

"Ah! You remember!"

"I remember," said the patient with closed eyes.

"You are in pain?"

"No, no; go on."

"She has never forgiven me!" The doctor's voice ringing out in all its natural vigour sounded strangely unnatural in the silence of the sick room. "She has, after all these years, taken her revenge, a triumph of ingenious cruelty. . . . I had not seen him—them—for a few weeks, and yesterday, I received a letter from her inclosing a photograph of the boy, refusing any further assistance from me on his account, as he can now earn a little for himself, and forbidding my ever seeing him again. Of course—you will understand—I went immediately, but they had gone! . . . What will become of him—of me!"

"Does Catherine know?"

"Yes—now. She came across her letter and the boy's photograph. In my anxiety I had been careless. She bore it very well. I don't think it will make much difference. Women—all but Beatrice—are indulgent; they understand and forgive. But I shall feel a difference."

The doctor was silent.

By-and-by he heard the voice of his patient, which had become suddenly feeble, sunk to the faintest whisper, so inaudible that he had to put his ear close to the struggling lips to catch what was said:

"Yes, I—knew Beatrice West—I loved her—I would—have married her—"

The doctor shot a quick, startled look of inquiry into his friend's eyes in which there beamed a brilliant light, a light, which, as he looked, became fainter and fainter, flickered a little, and then went out for ever.

RUDOLF DIRCKS.

A LITERARY CAUSERIE:

ON A BOOK OF VERSES

A BOOK of delicate, mournful, almost colourless, but very fragrant verses was lately published by a young poet whom I have the privilege to know somewhat intimately. Whether a book so essentially poetic, and at the same time so fragile in its hold on outward things, is likely to appeal very much to the general public, for which verse is still supposed to be written, it scarcely interests me to conjecture. It is a matter of more legitimate speculation, what sort of person would be called up before the mind's eye of any casual reader, as the author of love-poetry so reverent and so disembodied. A very ghostly lover, I suppose, wandering in a land of perpetual twilight, holding a whispered "colloque sentimental" with the ghost of an old love:

> "Dans le vieux parc solitaire et glacé
> Deux spectres ont évoqué le passé."

That is not how I have seen my friend, for the most part; and the contrast between the man as I have seen him and the writer of verses as I read them, is to me the most attractive interest of a book which I find singularly attractive. He will not mind, I know, if I speak of him with some of that frankness which we reserve usually for the dead, or with which we sometimes honour our enemies; for he is of a complete indifference to these things, as I shall assure myself over again before these lines are printed.

I do not remember the occasion of our first meeting, but I remember seeing him casually, at railway-stations, in a semi-literary tavern which once had a fantastic kind of existence, and sometimes, at night, in various parts of the Temple, before I was more than slightly his acquaintance. I was struck then by a look and manner of pathetic charm, a sort of Keats-like face, the face of a demoralized Keats, and by something curious in the contrast of a manner exquisitely refined, with an appearance generally somewhat dilapidated. That impression was only accentuated, later on, when I came to know

him, and the manner of his life, much more intimately. I think I may date my first real impression of what one calls "the real man"—as if it were more real than the poet of the disembodied verses!—from an evening in which he first introduced me to those charming supper-houses, open all night through, the cabmen's shelters. There were four of us, two in evening dress, and we were welcomed, cordially and without comment, at a little place near the Langham; and, I recollect, very hospitably entertained. He was known there, and I used to think he was always at his best in a cabmen's shelter. Without a certain sordidness in his surroundings, he was never quite comfortable, never quite himself; and at those places you are obliged to drink nothing stronger than coffee or tea. I liked to see him occasionally, for a change, drinking nothing stronger than coffee or tea. At Oxford, I believe, his favourite form of intoxication had been haschisch; afterwards he gave up this somewhat elaborate experiment in visionary sensations for readier means of oblivion; but he returned to it, I remember, for at least one afternoon, in a company of which I had been the gatherer, and of which I was the host. The experience was not a very successful one; it ended in what should have been its first symptom, immoderate laughter. It was disappointing, and my charming, expectant friends, disappointed.

Always, perhaps a little consciously, but at least always sincerely, in search of new sensations, my friend found what was for him the supreme sensation in a very passionate and tender adoration of the most escaping of all ideals, the ideal of youth. Cherished, as I imagine, first only in the abstract, this search after the immature, the ripening graces which time can but spoil in the ripening, found itself at the journey's end, as some of his friends thought, a little prematurely. I was never of their opinion. I only saw twice, and for a few moments only, the young girl to whom most of his verses were to be written, and whose presence in his life may be held to account for much of that astonishing contrast between the broad outlines of his life and work. The situation seemed to me of the most exquisite and appropriate impossibility. She had the gift of evoking, and, in its way, of retaining, all that was most delicate, sensitive, shy, typically poetic, in a nature which I can only compare to a weedy garden, its grass trodden down by many feet, but with one small, carefully-tended flower-bed, luminous with lilies. I used to think, sometimes, of Verlaine and his "girl-wife," the one really profound passion, certainly, of that passionate career; the charming, child-like creature, to whom he looked back, at the end of his life, with an unchanged tenderness and disappointment: "Vous n'avez rien compris à ma

simplicité," as he lamented. In the case of my friend there was, however, a sort of virginal devotion, as to a Madonna; and I think had things gone happily, to a conventionally happy ending, he would have felt (dare I say?) that his ideal had been spoilt.

But, for the good fortune of poets, things never do go happily with them, or to conventionally happy endings. So the wilder wanderings began, and a gradual slipping into deeper and steadier waters of oblivion. That curious love of the sordid, so common an affectation of the modern decadent, and with him so expressively genuine, grew upon him, and dragged him into yet more sorry corners of a life which was never exactly "gay" to him. And now, indifferent to most things, in the shipwrecked quietude of a sort of self-exile, he is living, I believe, somewhere on a remote foreign sea-coast. People will complain, probably, in his verses, of what will seem to them the factitious melancholy, the factitious idealism, and (peeping through at a few rare moments) the factitious suggestions of riot. They will see only a literary affectation where in truth there is as poignant a note of personal sincerity as in the more explicit and arranged confessions of less admirable poets. Yes, in these few, evasive, immaterial snatches of song, I find, implied for the most part, hidden away like a secret, all the fever and turmoil and the unattained dreams of a life which has itself had much of the swift, disastrous, and suicidal energy of genius.

ARTHUR SYMONS.

NOTE

A COMMITTEE has been formed, in Paris, under the presidency of M. Stéphane Mallarmé, and the vice-presidency of M. Auguste Rodin, for the erection of a monument to Paul Verlaine. The members of the Committee are: MM. Edmond Lepelletier, Catulle Mendès, Henry Bauër, Raoul Ponchon, Georges Rodenbach, Comte Robert de Montesquiou-Fezensac, Maurice Barrès, Ernest Delahaye, Alfred Valette, editor of the "Mercure de France," Léon Deschamps, editor of "La Plume." Alexandre Natanson, editor of the "Revue Blanche." The treasurer is M. Fernand Clerget; the secretary, M. F. A. Cazals. I have been asked by M. Mallarmé to act as English representative of this Committee, and to receive subscriptions, which may be sent to me at the office of "The Savoy," Effingham House, Arundel Street, Strand, London, W.C.

ARTHUR SYMONS.

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